



At Home in Durham

Durham Region Housing Plan 2014 - 2024



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Message from the Regional Chair and CEO



I am pleased to introduce *At Home in Durham*, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024. *At Home in Durham* is the result of extensive community consultation during the past year. The plan builds on the Region's commitments, as outlined in "Growing Together," the Durham Region Strategic Plan 2009-2014, and the Regional Official Plan (ROP), to develop a broad range of affordable housing and housing opportunities.

Affordable, accessible and suitable housing is essential for healthy communities, and strong and vibrant neighbourhoods. It underpins the quality of life for people in Durham, at every stage of their lives.

During the consultation, residents and stakeholders told us that they want the Region of Durham to be a leader in the housing sector—working co-operatively with area municipalities, the non-profit and private sectors, and leveraging support for innovative housing solutions from all levels of government. The success of *At Home in Durham* depends on these strong partnerships.

I look forward to continued collaboration, as we work to achieve the goals of *At Home in Durham*. Together, we can ensure that Durham Region continues to be a safe, healthy, caring, inclusive community that will be sustainable for future generations.

The Region of Durham thanks all of the people and organizations that participated in the community consultations and provided input for the development of *At Home in Durham*. Your contributions were invaluable in creating a plan that reflects the needs and hopes of our communities.

Roger Anderson
Regional Chair and CEO



Background

At Home in Durham, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024, is an extension of the Region's commitment to affordable housing set out in Growing Together, the Durham Region Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and the Regional Official Plan. It is an integrated housing plan that lays out the Region's vision for housing during the next 10 years, and aligns this vision with the requirement for a housing and homelessness plan under the *Housing Services Act* and the housing strategy required under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

At Home in Durham will address the challenges and opportunities in providing suitable and affordable housing options that meet the needs of all of Durham's current and future residents.

At Home in Durham sets out the Region's direction for housing, including an assessment of current and future housing needs; goals related to the identified needs; and realistic actions to meet the diverse range of these needs. It provides a description of anticipated outcomes and how progress is to be measured as Durham works to implement its plan.

Vision Statement

Durham will be a united group of vibrant and diverse communities recognized for their leadership, community spirit and exceptional quality of life.

Mission Statement

Meeting the needs of the Durham community through leadership, co-operation and service excellence.

Goals of At Home in Durham



End Homelessness in Durham



Affordable Rent for Everyone



Greater Housing Choice



Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods



Durham Housing Review

To develop *At Home in Durham*, the Region initiated the Durham Housing Review (beginning in May 2010) to address housing issues within Durham, and establish a basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the Region's policies influencing housing market conditions.

In addition, broad community consultations were held throughout summer and fall 2013, including public workshops, focus group discussions and completion of an online survey.

Durham Housing Review Background Reports

- No. 1 - Housing Policy Context, Trends and Indicators (2010)**
- No. 2 - Supply of Housing and Development Activity (2010)**
- No. 3 - Housing Affordability (2011)**
- No. 4 - Specialized Housing Needs (2012)**
- No. 5 - Community Consultations (2014)**

The findings from the Durham Housing Review and community consultations are provided in five background reports and available on the Region of Durham's website at www.durham.ca/housingreview.



Goals of At Home in Durham

The four goals of *At Home in Durham* are designed to address the key findings from the Durham Housing Review and community consultations. Specifically, there is a need for:

- More affordable rental housing options for low and moderate income households.
- Innovative housing solutions that support diverse, integrated and sustainable communities, which offer a mix of compact development, encourage transit and active transportation options, and preserve green space.
- More supportive housing options and improved access to information about support services for the homeless, youth, people with disabilities (physical, mental and developmental), victims of domestic violence and seniors.

Rental affordability was consistently identified as a priority issue in the community consultations and is the primary housing challenge that Durham faces.



Goal 1: End Homelessness in Durham



- Develop long-term innovative approaches to improve the ability of households to access housing.
- Develop long-term innovative approaches to improve the ability of households to retain their housing.

Goal 2: Affordable Rent for Everyone



- Increase the privately funded affordable rental housing supply.
- Increase federal and provincial government-funded, affordable rental housing supply.
- Increase rental assistance for low income households.

Goal 3: Greater Housing Choice



- Diversify housing options by type, size and tenure.
- Improve access to safe and secure housing that supports the needs of a diverse community.

Goal 4: Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods



- Preserve the private rental housing stock.
- Strengthen the social housing sector.
- Support an energy efficient, environmentally sustainable rental housing stock.

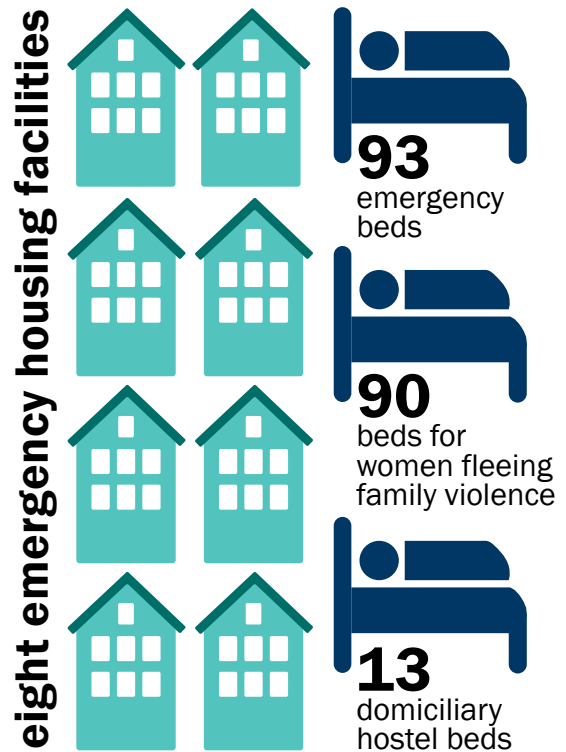


Goal 1:

End Homelessness

Develop long-term innovative approaches to improve the ability of households to access housing.

- Design and implement a new local system for selecting households for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) and other forms of assisted housing that gives people greater choice in deciding where they want to live.
- Continue to provide priority for social housing to victims of domestic violence through the provincial Special Priority policy.
- Partner with community agencies to provide mental health and addictions supports, as appropriate, for people experiencing homelessness.
- Work with community partners to develop an inventory of supportive and supported housing in Durham Region.



> 1,200 households use emergency shelters

2,785 households access other homeless programs

There are **only 28 transitional housing beds**, with limited supports for residents.



in Durham



Develop long-term innovative approaches to improve the ability of households to retain their housing.

- Work with community partners to strengthen and better connect homelessness and housing stability programs and services, including access to support services for youth, seniors, people experiencing mental health and addictions issues, and victims of domestic violence.
- Strengthen eviction prevention programs that are successful in retaining housing.
- Develop a comprehensive eviction prevention policy for the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) to assist tenants in maintaining their tenancies and make this policy available to all affordable housing providers.



VS



87% success in programs preventing eviction

57% success in outreach to find a new home once homeless



27.6% of households in 2011 identified **mental health** and **substance abuse** as contributing factors.



70% of homeless are single

There is **no single coordinating body** for **all areas of support**



Goal 2:

Affordable Rent

Increase the privately funded affordable rental housing supply.

- Work with local partners and the private sector to consider innovative building techniques and financial arrangements to support the development of new affordable housing, including student housing.
- In compliance with Regional by-laws governing the sale of real property, identify any real property owned by the Region deemed to be surplus to promote, facilitate and support the development of new affordable rental housing.
- Monitor Official Plan policies and encourage area municipalities to review their Official Plans and by-laws with a view of creating an enabling environment for affordable housing solutions.

Only **24%** of **single parent** families **can afford** a **3 bedroom** unit.



Renters struggle with **housing affordability** as their **income is 1/2 of homeowners' income.**



45% of renters spend **> 30%** income on housing

20% of renters spend **> 50%** income on housing

Lack of affordable rental housing options for people with **low income**, in particular for **non-senior singles** and those requiring **support services.**



for Everyone



Increase federal and provincial government-funded, affordable rental housing supply.

- In consultation with the local community, explore the feasibility of redeveloping existing social housing sites consistent with Regional intensification strategies.
- Leverage available provincial and federal funding to increase the supply of new affordable rental housing.
- Advocate with community partners for senior governments to invest/reinvest in housing.



Low income among **people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, youth and vulnerable populations** is higher than the Regional average.

Increase rental assistance for low income households.

- Evaluate the Durham Housing Benefit and explore other options to make housing more affordable for low-income households.
- Develop a long-term strategy to sustain the Council approved target of 4,481 rent-geared-to-income units within Durham.
- Leverage available provincial and federal funding to support ongoing rent assistance for low-income households.



more than **5,000** applicants waiting



Less than **half of single non-senior** people can **afford to rent even a basic bachelor** unit.

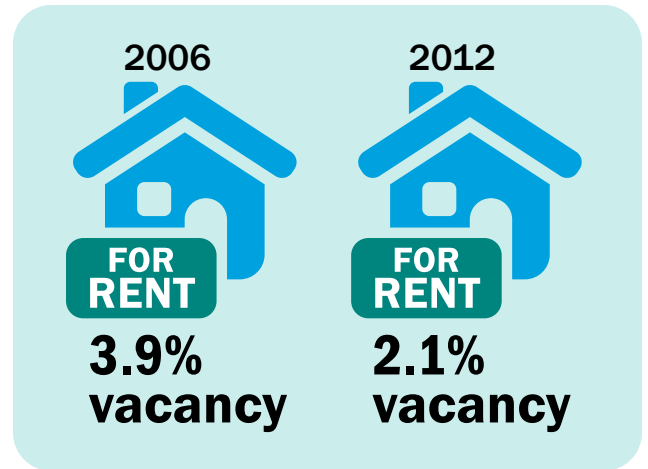


Goal 3:

Greater Housing

Diversify housing options by type, size and tenure.

- In partnership with area municipalities, promote the Region's commitment to higher density development, intensification and brownfield redevelopment.
- Explore strategies with sector partners to encourage development of new rental housing.
- Encourage area municipalities to review and develop enabling policies for secondary and garden suites, in existing housing and new housing developments.
- Explore options with area municipalities to support affordable home ownership for low and moderate income households.

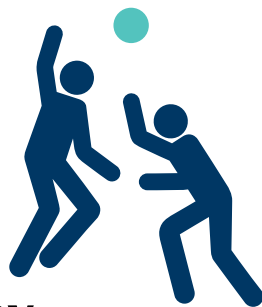


24.1% of people in Durham are **age 55 or older**, most live in a **single detached** house.

Seniors will increase to almost **1/3** of the **population** by **2031**.

Youth face significant **challenges** finding and sustaining housing in the community.

In 2012, **436** youth accessed **emergency shelter services**.



Choice



Improve access to safe and secure housing that supports the needs of a diverse community.

- Work with community partners to encourage the development of transitional and supported housing for at-risk youth.
- Continue to ensure that all new affordable housing developed in Durham incorporates barrier-free, universal and or flex design features in both common areas and living units.
- Work with community partners to provide better integration of, and access to, human services and housing supports for vulnerable people.
- Continue to partner with the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and health-care agencies to support assisted living opportunities for seniors.
- Support the efforts of local Aboriginal organizations to access federal or provincial funding to create housing that meets the needs of Aboriginal people living off-reserve.



7.6% of people in Durham have **physical disabilities.**

Owner-occupied dwellings 82.7%

Rental housing 17.3%



Less than **1%** of **new housing stock** built between 2000 and 2009 was **rental.**



Goal 4:

Strong and Vibrant

Preserve the private rental housing stock.

- Continue to work with area municipalities to promote the Regional Revitalization Program to strategically target Regional investment to area municipally-led Community Improvement Projects, including affordable rental housing, which advance Regional Official Plan policies and encourage residential and employment growth in the region's key urban locations.
- Work with local partners and the private sector to explore innovative financing models, to support the renovation and rehabilitation of existing rental housing.
- Encourage area municipalities to review and incorporate Official Plan policies, consistent with the Regional Official Plan, that protect the existing supply of residential rental units from conversion to condominium tenure.
- Undertake activities in partnership with area municipal officials to promote safe and sustainable rental housing in our communities.



households are forecast to increase from 214,000 in 2011 to 356,000 in 2031

30% of rental housing is social housing.

12% of social housing is suitable for single non-seniors.

< 3% of social housing is suitable for larger families.



Neighbourhoods



Strengthen the social housing sector.

- Develop a policy to sustain the social housing supply post expiration of operating agreements and mortgage maturity.
- Develop a long-term, asset-management and financial strategy to sustain and support the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) portfolio.
- Complete building condition assessments for all social housing administered by the Region, and assist housing providers in understanding the role of these assessments and their value in long-term capital planning.
- Provide supports to the volunteer boards of directors of non-profit and cooperative housing providers to strengthen their capacity to effectively manage their housing communities, and to develop long-term asset-management and financial strategies.



20% of rental housing and **2% of owner-occupied** housing is **in need of repair.**

Support an energy efficient, environmentally sustainable rental housing stock.

- Continue to ensure that all new affordable housing developed in Durham is built in a sustainable manner, promoting conservation and incorporating energy efficient systems.
- Promote opportunities for social housing providers to build partnerships to support capital improvements, and development of green plans and energy retrofits.



Partnerships

Ultimately, the success of the Durham Housing Plan in meeting the identified needs of residents is contingent on the strength and commitment of all housing partners, all of whom have a unique role to play:

- the federal and provincial governments
- the Region of Durham
- area municipalities
- community partners, including non-profit agencies and non-profit and co-operative housing providers
- the private sector, including landlords, developers and investors



Critical Actions of the Federal and Provincial Governments

The federal and provincial governments have vital roles to increase the supply of affordable housing, and availability of and access to support services. They must also support local planning and service delivery related to housing and homelessness.

Although the province recognizes that Ontario's municipalities are the largest contributors to funding for housing and homelessness services, and that the future of affordable housing depends on sustained funding, there is no long-term funding commitment from the federal or provincial government to support local planning and service delivery.

The Region, in collaboration with its partners, will continue to advocate for the funding commitments and legislative and policy changes, necessary to support the implementation of *At Home in Durham*.





Positive Outcomes for Our Communities

At Home in Durham offers a foundation for more locally responsive, integrated and accountable services with respect to housing and homelessness in the region. Grounded in the principles of “Housing First”, the four goals of the plan support positive outcomes for individuals and families by focussing on access to safe, affordable and stable housing, with links to appropriate supports, in order to sustain housing.

At Home in Durham will be supported by an implementation plan to uphold the goals and primary actions outlined in the plan. As part of the implementation process, the Region of Durham will further develop its blueprint for action and continue to identify key housing issues, set targets, monitor performance and report annually on achievements.

The Region of Durham will work with its community partners and local post-secondary institutions to develop metrics to evaluate housing and homelessness initiatives in our communities, and to support the continued improvement of the Durham Housing Plan.

The Region of Durham values its partners in housing and will continue to work with them over the term of the Durham Housing Plan to ensure that everyone is at home in Durham.



Goal 1: End Homelessness in Durham



- Easier and more co-ordinated access to programs and support services to maintain housing.
- Increased support and quicker access to affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.
- Improved information about, and access to, the supportive and supported housing system in the region.

Goal 2: Affordable Rent for Everyone



- More affordable rental housing options in the private market for low and moderate income households.
- An increased supply of government-assisted rental housing options.
- Increased rental assistance for low-income households.
- Easier and more co-ordinated access to affordable housing options.

Goal 3: Greater Housing Choice



- More options for affordable housing across the region.
- Higher-density housing options.
- Increased supply of safe and legal secondary and garden suites.
- Increased transitional and supported housing for at-risk youth.
- Increased accessible housing options for people with disabilities.
- An integrated approach to human services and housing supports for vulnerable people.

Goal 4: Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods



- Safe and secure housing.
- Revitalized communities that include affordable rental housing.
- High-quality, well-maintained, financially viable social housing stock.
- A more energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable housing stock.





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