



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM

Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan

NOVEMBER 24, 2023





Executive Summary

Housing is fundamental to healthy and inclusive communities. For this reason the Regional Municipality of Durham is committed to providing a range of housing options for both current and future residents.

Communities all across Ontario, including Durham Region, are experiencing housing pressures due to changing demographics and market trends. Providing a range of housing forms, including attainable, affordable, and accessible housing, is foundational to preventing homelessness and supporting persons, ensuring the well-being of all residents.

This Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan will guide Durham Region's strategic actions and investments to meet pressing service needs and inform longer-term objectives related to increasing housing options that support strong and vibrant communities.

Background

WHY TAKE A SYSTEMS PLANNING APPROACH

IT'S HOLISTIC

Instead of relying on an organization-by-organization or program-by-program approach, a systems approach works to develop a framework for the whole to create a standard among all partners and stakeholders.

IT'S PERSON-CENTERED

An integrated systems approach centers the individual and then works its way out to the larger community.

“ Systems Planning is the analysis, planning and design of an integrated system and defined services that work together towards a common end — in this case to prevent, reduce and end homelessness”¹



¹ “Systems Planning 101: Infographic.” Homelessness Learning Hub. Found here: <https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/wp-content/uploads/resources/module-2-infograph.pdf>

Previous Learning that Underpins this Plan

REPORTS AND REVIEWS

AT HOME IN DURHAM

The 10-year housing and homelessness plan set out by the region in 2014. After almost 10 years, progress has been made and efforts continue to be focused on the goals to end homelessness, providing affordable rent for everyone, enhancing greater housing choice and developing strong and vibrant neighbourhoods.

DURHAM REGION STRATEGIC PLAN

The corporate strategic plan from 2020 that envisioned a healthy, prosperous community for all.

ORGCODE CONSULTING INC. REVIEW

This report concluded with 24 key recommendations for services and supports to address the immediate needs in the community. The recommendations provided a comprehensive foundation to build the integrated system action plan, that outlines step-by-step actions for implementation.

Common Housing System Models

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

Describes the range of housing options in a community – based on income and support needs and form of housing – from homelessness to market housing. Ideally, a community will have housing options available at all points on the continuum to meet the varying needs of its current and future residents.



Source: CMHC

THE WHEELHOUSE MODEL

A circular way of looking at the housing system. The Wheelhouse recognizes that housing needs and services can move in any direction depending on one’s life circumstances. It also recognizes that ownership may not be an end goal nor achievable for certain individuals, and the importance of a variety of housing options for a diverse and inclusive housing system.



Source: City of Kelowna

The Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan will address options for people unsheltered or accessing emergency and transitional housing in the system.

The Current Homelessness Service System in Durham Region

| HOUSING SYSTEMS | # BEDS/UNITS | LOCATION/TYPE | TARGET POPULATION |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Homeless Hubs and Warming centres | 15 | Oshawa - Back Door Mission (BDM) | |
| | 50-70 | Oshawa - Do Unto Others (DUO) | |
| | 30 | Whitby - Christian Faith Outreach Centre (CFOC) | |
| | 25 | Ajax/Pickering - Dedicated Advocacy Resource Support (DARS) | |
| | 10 | North Durham - Community Living Durham North (CLDN) | |
| | 130-150 Spaces | | |
| Emergency Shelters | 40 beds | Oshawa - Cornerstone | male |
| | 5 beds | Oshawa - Cornerstone, motel | seniors |
| | 45 beds | Whitby - Muslim Welfare | women and children |
| | 50 beds | Ajax - CFOC | male and female |
| | 10 beds | Ajax - Durham Youth Services | youth only |
| | 150 Total Beds | | |
| Transitional Housing | 26 units | Whitby - Muslim Welfare | female |
| | 9 beds | Oshawa - Cornerstone | |
| | 9 beds | Oshawa - Micro Homes | |
| 44 Total Beds/Units | | | |

45
EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS
in development
 1635 Dundas Street,
 Whitby

Homelessness in Durham

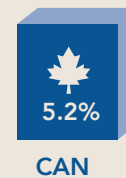
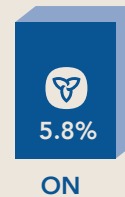


Homelessness in Durham Region

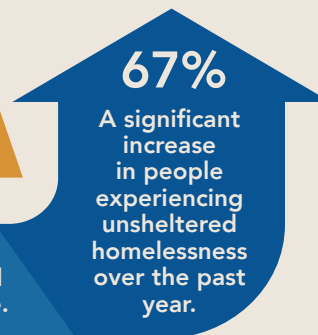
The homelessness crisis is complex and the risk factors leading people to homelessness often intersect. Durham Region is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and has seen a significant increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness since the pandemic.



Population Growth Rate



In 2023, 331 individuals on Durham Region's By-Name List (BNL)² are experiencing homelessness, compared to 134 in 2017.³



More people are experiencing homelessness across Durham Region. A recent report to Durham Regional Council outlined an increase of 144% in Whitby alone.

Low-Income

Durham Region has an estimated 45,800 residents (6.6%) living with low income, defined as \$26,570 after tax for an individual and \$53,140 for a family of four.



Since 2018, the current combined maximum amount for basic needs and shelter for a single OW recipient is **\$733/month**.

Social Assistance

As of January 2023, the number of Ontario Works (OW) recipients in Durham was 12,835. The number of Ontario Disability Support Program recipients was 19,952.

Average rent in Durham Region for a one-bedroom apartment: **\$1731/month**.

Two-bedroom apartment: **\$2123/month**.

People experiencing homelessness have varied, complex needs and require multifaceted supports including mental and physical health, food security, newcomer supports, child care, employment, social supports etc.



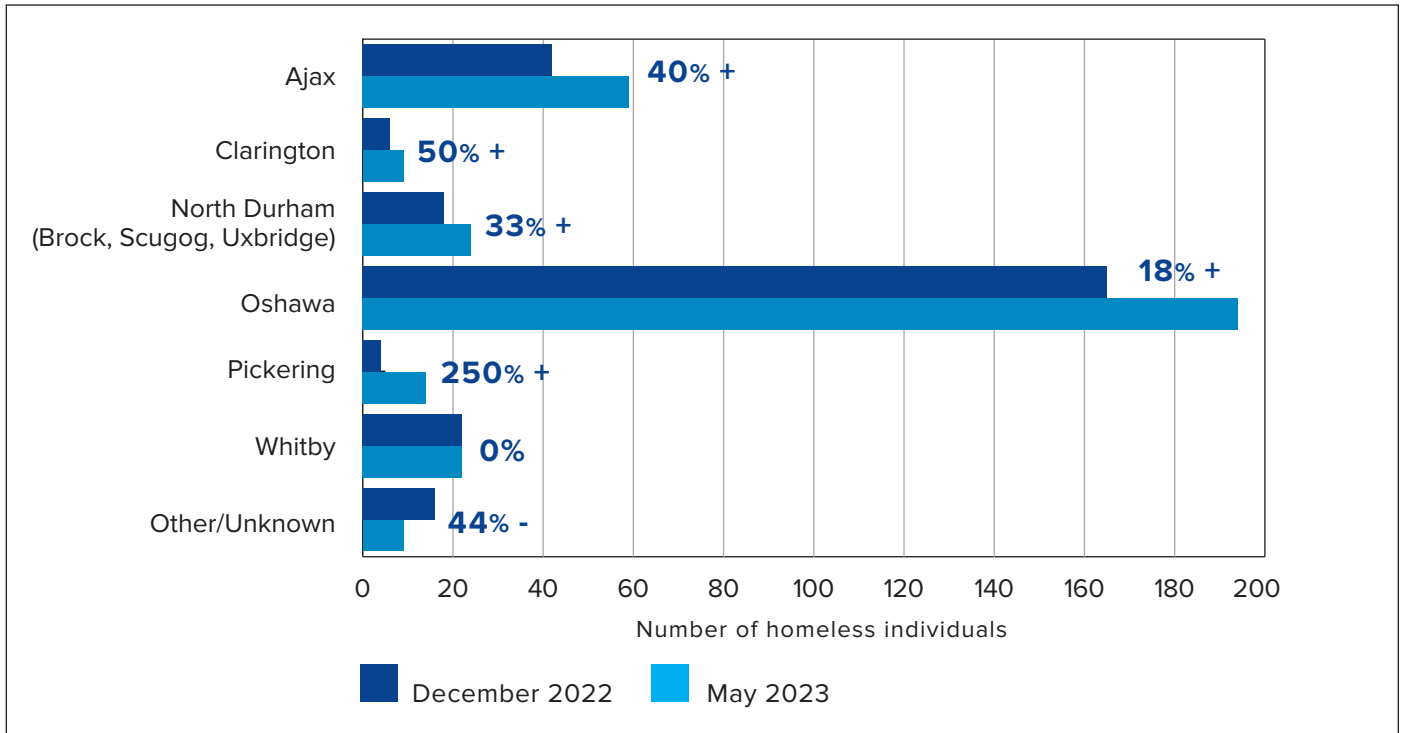
In 2021, 54% of people experiencing homelessness on the BNL in Durham had high acuity or high needs.² This increased to 64% in 2022.

References:

1. Statistics Canada. 2021 Census Population
2. The By-Name List is a tool that supports coordinated access in Durham. These are individuals who are actively accessing the homelessness system and who have provided consent to receive support and be matched with appropriate housing resources. The number of those who self-identify, and access the homelessness system who have not provided consent is significantly higher.
3. Durham Region Social Services Department

DURHAM'S ACTIVELY HOMELESS DATA DECEMBER 2022-MAY 2023

Source: Durham Region Commissioner's Report May 2023



DURHAM HAS SEEN AN

85%

increase in families experiencing homelessness

67%

of people who are homeless are unsheltered

IT IS PREDICTED THAT ON THIS CURRENT PATH

DURHAM RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WILL INCREASE

48%

by 2025

Source: Durham Region Commissioner's Report May 2023

“The By-Name List is a tool that enables coordinated support in Durham. For individuals who are actively accessing the homelessness system and who have provided consent to receive support and be matched with appropriate housing resources. The number of those who self-identify and access the homelessness system who have not provided consent is significantly higher.”

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In Durham Region there is a growing demand for more housing options. From 2016 to 2021, there was a 7.9% increase in population in the region, reaching a total population of 696,992, which we know has grown over the last two years since the 2021 Census was conducted.

FROM 2016 TO 2021

7.9%

increase in population
in the Durham

[total population = 696,992]

AGE DISTRIBUTION IN DURHAM

36.3%

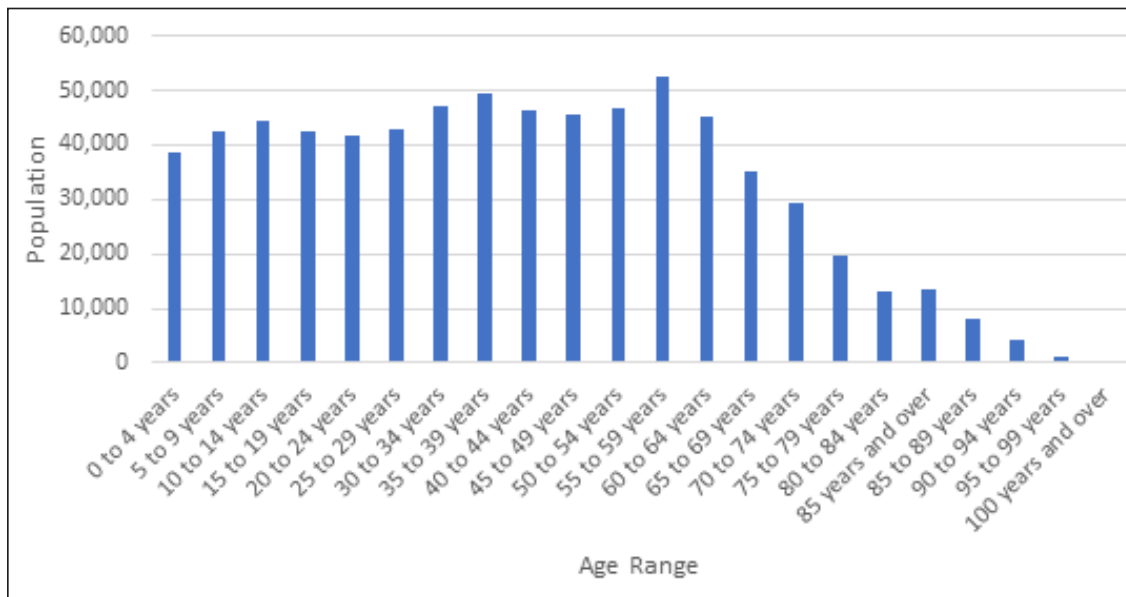
of the population is
below 30 years old

50.1%

of the population is
younger than 40 years old

AGE DISTRIBUTION IN DURHAM (2021)

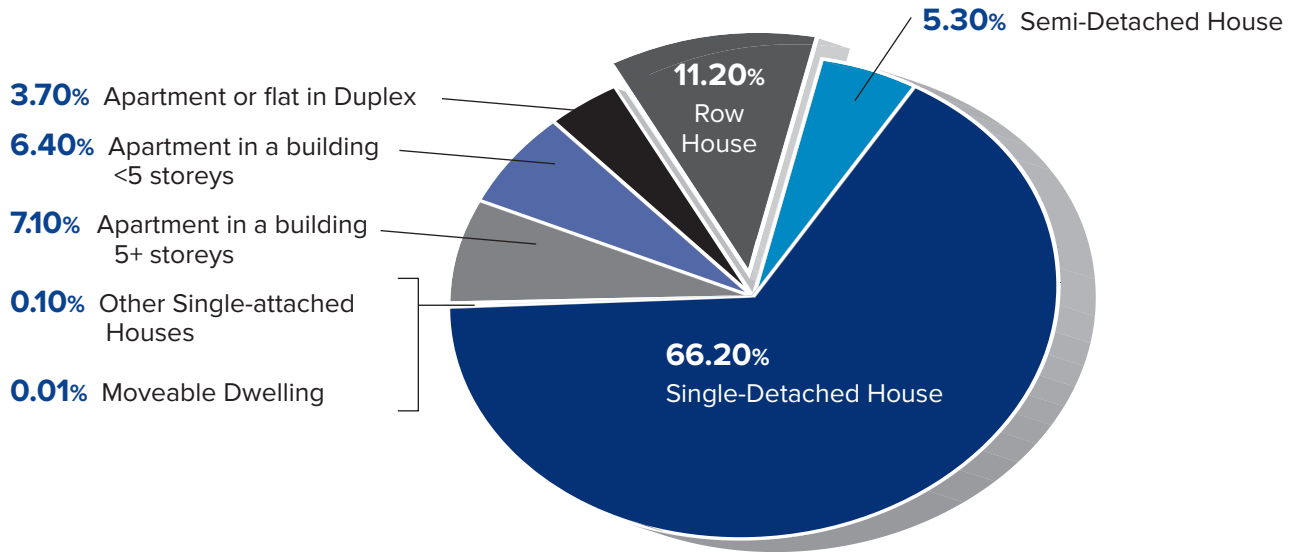
Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census



DURHAM REGION PRIVATE DWELLINGS BREAKDOWN

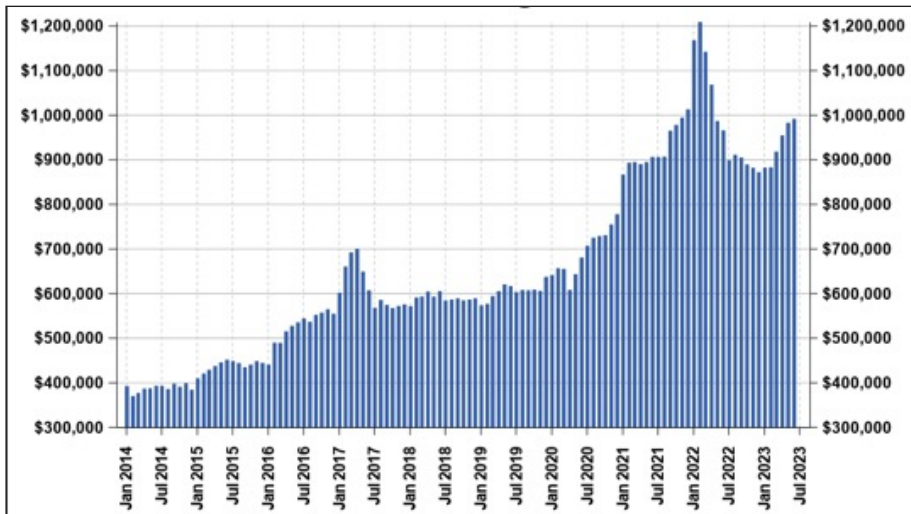
Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

Durham’s current housing stock does not reflect the needs of the segment of the population now entering the market.



RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE PRICE DURHAM REGION 2014-2023

Source: The Canadian Real Estate Association



Single-family detached homes are not a viable option for low-income households, including younger adults looking to own their own home.

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

To validate the current needs and challenges in Durham, several community consultations were held, including key informant interviews, a stakeholder consultation with service providers, a community open house, stakeholder focus groups and a system planning workshop. These discussions reinforced the extensive efforts by organizations to address community needs as well as demonstrated progress since the 2022 OrgCode Review. Several key themes were common among all consultations, including:

| |
|--|
| Growing complexity and scale of homelessness combined with mental health and addictions crisis |
| Lack of affordable housing and shelter space |
| Fragmented efforts in addressing homelessness |
| Need for focused supports for key population: families, women/children, and seniors |
| Lack of public awareness of needs and communication between stakeholders |
| Concerns around 1635 Dundas Street project |
| New Programs needed to address unmet needs |

KEY SYSTEM NEEDS

As identified by the data analysis, best practice review and community input, there are several key needs for the housing and homelessness system in Durham Region. From a systems approach.

| |
|--|
| There is a gap in support for individuals who are being discharged from hospitals |
| There is inadequate after care processes to support those experiencing homelessness as well as supporting those at risk of homelessness |
| Due to limited availability in shelter beds and insufficient post-care planning, homeless people exiting healthcare treatments are going back on the street and illnesses are being exacerbated. Unsheltered individuals and those at risk of homelessness require more attention by the system to support their needs |
| Seniors are commonly identified by the community as being in critical need of support due to limited shelter beds and an acute need for affordable supportive housing |
| With 50.1% of the population under the age of 40, over the next 5-10 years, the need for more affordable 1 and 2 bedroom units (both to rent and own) will increase as individuals enter the housing market |
| 25,165 households (10.6% of all households in Durham) are in core housing need meaning an individual's housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability, and they would have to spend 30% or more of its their total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable, according to Statistics Canada |

Recommendations

GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

After extensive consultations and analysis of previous reviews, five key strategic goals were established that will guide the recommended actions in the Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan.

- 1 Implement System Integration, Planning and Management
- 2 Improve System Capacity and Service Levels
- 3 Expand Social and Community Investment
- 4 Achieve System Excellence
- 5 Boost System Growth of Housing Supply

Within each goal are strategic priorities that guide the recommendations. Appendix 1 offers a summary of each recommendation with fulfillment actions that have been prioritized based on need and a recommended implementation timeline based on available resources and investments.

A effective system incorporates several key features including accountability, transparency, ensuring the value for money, quality service delivery, and process standardization, all of which informed the development of the recommendations.

Within each recommendation are action items that support each deliverable over the 2023-to-2027 timeframe. The workplan will inform key activities and progress will be monitored through a measurement strategy, including regular reviews. Some items are interdependent and therefore are prerequisites for other deliverables.

The Workplan items will inform work in progress and reportable items coming soon.

The Vision

The Region of Durham is creating an Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan to address challenges currently facing their communities and to inform further strategic planning and investments.

The Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan has been developed incorporating Durham's vision set out in their Housing and Homelessness Plan to ensure Durham will be a united group of vibrant and diverse communities recognized for their leadership, community spirit and exceptional quality of life.

1 IMPLEMENT SYSTEM INTEGRATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

To help foster exceptional quality of life and wellbeing of all residents.

| 4 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | 10 RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|---|
| Demonstrate leadership in homelessness prevention and response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance system leadership • Enhance access to training for system leaders • Increase capacity to coordinate new major projects • Create an investment strategy to balance needs across the system |
| Collaborate across sectors to ensure value for investments and quality services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal multi-disciplinary collaboration • Clarify the role of emergency services personnel in addressing homelessness • Formalize approaches to responding to encampments • Increase efficiency and effectiveness of committees and networks |
| Engage community members with lived experience to inform system planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Lived Experience Advisory Committee – GAP Committee |
| Data Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create coordinated data management approach to ensure data integrity and reporting |

2 IMPROVE SYSTEM CAPACITY AND SERVICE LEVELS

To provide exceptional value to the Durham community through a range of service options as well as responsive and effective service delivery.

| 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | 15 RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|--|
| Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review service delivery approaches to minimize overlap and ensure range of services and access points • Amplify Service Hubs • Professionalize the Multi-Disciplinary System of Care • Develop a Service Providers Tool Kit |
| Collaborate for a seamless service experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize Cross-Sector Partnerships • Improve Wellness, Stability and Support Services • Formalize Discharge Planning and Community Reintegration Options • Improve Front-Line Service Communication • Host Regular Networking Events for Agencies and Service Providers |
| Develop service responses to meet needs through collaboration and evidence informed decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand emergency service responses to meet the needs of those unhoused • Expand transitional housing support services • Expand supportive housing opportunities throughout the Region |
| Enhance service quality and accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create standard business processes to improve accountability |
| Expand homelessness prevention initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Diversion • Enhance Housing Focused Outreach Activities throughout Durham Region |

3 EXPAND SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

To ensure a range of services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.

| 3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | 8 RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|---|
| Ensure system design and investments provide service access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-Size Shelter Options for the Entire Region • Funding and Program Coordination |
| Create strategies to respond to service gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Stabilization in Housing Options Across the Continuum • Improve Access to Health Services for People Impacted by Housing Crisis and Homelessness • Ensure Equitable Access to Housing Crisis and Homelessness Services throughout the Region • Enhance Mental Health Support Services |
| Invest in housing as a solution to homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize opportunities to increase deeply affordable housing options • Housing is the Solution |

4 ACHIEVE SYSTEM EXCELLENCE

To build a strong and resilient service system based on investments from all levels of government, community and private sector and supported by strong system management and accountability.

| 3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | 5 RECOMMENDATIONS |
|--|--|
| Leverage community assets to ensure service delivery and quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community stakeholders to inform system planning, delivery and quality assurance |
| Enhance communication to increase public awareness of needs and access to services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and collaboration with local poverty reduction Initiatives • Implement systems of community education on homelessness and shelter systems |
| Demonstrate commitment to continuous quality improvement and accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve consistency of sector standards of care, policies, procedures and service delivery expectations • Enhance Appreciation for Retention of Health, Human, Emergency and Social Service Staff |

5 BOOST SYSTEM GROWTH OF HOUSING SUPPLY

Develop a sustained increase in the housing supply across Durham Region to meet the needs of all residents across the housing spectrum through the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness plan.

| 2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | 4 RECOMMENDATIONS |
|--|---|
| Increase number of affordable housing units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire Existing Units |
| Increase number of transitional and supportive housing units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop service expansion strategy (including bridge housing) • Municipal toolkit • Incentivize development |

Measurement Strategy

A measurement strategy has been created to inform how progress will be tracked and reported to Council and the community based on the key strategic priorities and recommendations. Reporting will occur twice annually.

Investment Strategy

Developing and managing a system plan is a tool to strategically inform both financial and human-resource investments in addition to contributions by community, not for profit organizations, senior levels of government and key supporting sectors such as health and justice.

A separate report will follow with corresponding recommendations for consideration by Council to support the implementation of the system plan.

Conclusion

Durham Region is dedicated to developing an Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan that will guide priorities and investments to support persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness in their communities. Implementing a systems approach will allow the Region to work with partners and key stakeholders across sectors, to provide effective responses and an efficient use of resources resulting in positive outcomes. Ensuring the system is person-centered with service alignment will support the improved wellbeing of everyone in the community.

The Action Plan development took into consideration Durham Region's current housing and homelessness plan, corporate strategic plan, the 2022 system review by OrgCode, and community consultations. The Action Plan provides a roadmap for implementation and will be supported by an accountability framework which will track progress for each action item and reporting requirements to Council and the community. The goals identified are intended to support Durham's goal of eliminating chronic homelessness and vision for a vibrant and diverse community.

PREPARED BY:

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