



At Home in Durham

2018 Annual Report





Home in Durham – 2018 Annual Report

At Home in Durham, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024, was approved by Regional Council in June 2014. The plan lays out the Region’s long-term vision for housing and addresses the challenges and opportunities in providing suitable and affordable housing options that meet the needs of all people in Durham.

At Home in Durham focuses on four key goals related to housing and homelessness in our communities:



End Homelessness in Durham



Affordable Rent for Everyone



Greater Housing Choice



Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods

At Home in Durham sets out a number of anticipated outcomes and key actions to support the realization of each of these goals.

In October 2017, Regional Council endorsed the Affordable and Seniors’ Housing Task Force Report, “Championing Affordable Rental and Seniors’ Housing Across Durham Region” which highlights the important role that affordable and suitable housing plays in building inclusive, healthy and complete communities. Building on the work of *At Home in Durham*, the Task Force report sets out a six-point plan of action and 34 recommendations to address the need for the creation of more affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income households, and the need for more housing choices for seniors in Durham.

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2463.

This is the fourth annual report of *At Home in Durham*. It highlights activities over the past year – including strategic investments in new housing and homelessness funding that support the goals of the plan – and provides a qualitative measure of the progress to date that will contribute to the success of the plan. These measures are determined using the following scale:

Early Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early discussions about potential strategies or initiatives that may have an impact.
Limited Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategies in place or limited actions/initiatives that may have an impact.
Some Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions/initiatives underway that have had some impact that is not yet sustained.
Good Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions/initiatives underway that are having a sustained impact.





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

Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances¹, including:

- Unsheltered – living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation
- Emergency Sheltered – overnight shelters for people who are homeless or victims of family violence
- Provisionally Accommodated – accommodation that is temporary or lacks security of tenure
- At Risk of Homelessness – people whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

Durham has a relatively low incidence of unsheltered and emergency sheltered households when compared to more urbanized areas in Canada. In 2017, the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) and Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) coordinated a Point in Time (PiT) count to identify homeless households in Durham who were living unsheltered or who were using emergency and domestic violence shelters during one night in February. In total, there were 93 households surveyed and another 121 counted, but not surveyed. Only 30 households surveyed indicated that they were unsheltered (e.g. sleeping outdoors). The number of unsheltered

¹ Canadian Definition of Homelessness, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012.



households counted could easily be accommodated within the existing emergency shelter system in Durham.

Although Durham reported zero incidents of chronic homelessness² in 2015 and 2016, improved collection methods have revealed that there are individuals using the emergency shelter system who experience chronic homelessness. In 2017, there were 33 people who identified chronic homelessness and 101 incidences of episodic homelessness.³

Provisionally accommodated households face increasing pressures finding and maintaining affordable rental accommodation in their communities. The majority of the 2,296 households assisted by housing outreach workers in 2017 to obtain housing are likely provisionally accommodated. About 27 per cent of the 7,075 applicants on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait list applicants live in temporary accommodation or live without security of tenure (e.g. staying with family and friends, temporary accommodation in motels, staying in public institutions, like hospitals).

The majority of applicants on the DASH wait list are renters (about 67 per cent) and about 47 per cent of these are likely to be at risk of homelessness as they pay more than 50 per cent of their income on rent.

Single non-seniors continue to face the greatest challenges with homelessness. They represent over 90 per cent of emergency shelter users, have few options in the private rental market and face the longest wait times on the DASH wait list. Single non-seniors with special priority (SPP) wait upward of two years for social housing, and non-priority, single non-seniors are unlikely to be housed before they turn 60 years of age as very few one-bedroom, non-senior vacancies become available annually.

How are we doing?

The Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH) continues to support strategic decision-making around homelessness resources funded through the Region of Durham in order to ensure co-ordination across the network of community agencies that provide these services. Funding continues to focus on homelessness prevention and

² Chronic homelessness refers to households who are currently homeless and have been unsheltered or living in emergency shelter for at least six months in the previous year.

³ Episodic homelessness is defined as having experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in a year.



supports that will allow people to remain in their homes whenever possible. This increased co-ordination in supports makes it easier for people to access and maintain suitable and affordable housing.

The Region of Durham supports a number of homelessness programs through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). In 2017, the Region committed \$6,686,705 in 100 per cent provincial funding and \$375,451 in Regional funding to CHPI programs including emergency shelter services, housing outreach and the Housing Stability Program.

- The number of households using emergency shelter services⁴ has remained consistently low, averaging just under 1,400 households per year since 2014 (only about 0.6 per cent of all households in Durham). However, the average number of bed-nights has increased by 27 per cent from 2016 to 2017, putting pressure on the emergency shelter system.
- Housing outreach workers assisted 2,378 households secure housing and 3,995 maintain housing in 2017 – a 35 per cent increase from 2016. There was also a marked shift in the percentage of households assisted with eviction prevention. In previous years, this averaged about 44 per cent, but it increased to 63 per cent in 2017, likely due to the tight rental market and the reluctance of private landlords to house new low income tenants due to a perceived risk that they might incur rent arrears. Of the 2,378 households assisted in securing housing, outreach workers had success with only 82 households.
- The Housing Stability Program assisted 1,311 households in 2017, including one-time assistance with rental and utility arrears, last months' rent deposits and moving costs.

Support agencies are focussing their efforts on assisting vulnerable, low-income tenants to maintain their housing in the tight rental market in Durham. This includes mediating or negotiating with the landlord, supporting tenants at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and educating rooming house tenants about their rights and how to exercise them.

⁴ Excludes Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, which are not funded through the Region of Durham.





2017 Activity highlights

Cornerstone Community Association’s Housing First Program showed success in 2017 with 12 program participants moving from the shelter to more permanent housing. Once stably housed, program participants continue to work with Housing First workers to meet self-identified goals, including employment, education and social engagement activities.

Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) and the John Howard Society partnered to assist at-risk households with Housing Stability Program (HSP) applications. A dedicated worker meets with applicants to help them with the forms and the collection of supporting documents. This worker also attends the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) weekly to offer these services to tenants at risk of eviction.

VHA Home Healthcare expanded their programs in 2017 to include two services to support eviction prevention. Extreme Clean assists tenants in addressing public health and safety standards and includes follow up visits to maintain a clean and safe home. Durham Hoarding Support Services helps vulnerable individuals with hoarding behaviours remain housed using a combination of harm reduction strategies and counselling over the course of 4 to 6 months on average.



What's next?

In April 2018, the Region of Durham partnered with Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) and Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) to conduct a second enumeration of the homeless population in Durham. This enumeration was expanded from 2017 efforts to include a Registry Week in addition to the Point in Time (PiT) count. The new methodology is intended to be more inclusive in that it will also help to identify the provisionally accommodated and those at risk of homeless in addition to sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Results of this second enumeration will inform the five-year review of *At Home in Durham*.

The Region of Durham will be partnering with the Salvation Army to create a program to develop positive relationships with private landlords by offering community forums for landlord education. The focus will be on small landlords and those with second suites, and will both help to identify landlord partners that would be receptive to working with vulnerable tenants, and support landlords with maintaining stable tenancies.

The Province has introduced a Portable Housing Benefit for Special Priority Applicants (PHB-SPP). This new 100 per cent provincially-funded benefit is not tied to a vacancy, provides immediate assistance directly to victims of domestic violence, and extends financial assistance beyond social assistance shelter rates for eligible recipients. As the PHB-SPP is available on a first-come, first served basis, staff are actively engaged in identifying applicants on the DASH wait list who may be able to receive this benefit beginning in July 2018.





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

Low and moderate income people in Durham face increasing challenges in finding affordable rental housing across the region. Although the Region's social housing portfolio ensures a level of affordability for some of the most vulnerable people in our community – including seniors, people with disabilities and families in crisis – only 275 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units became available in 2017.

In order to address the affordability needs of all renters in Durham with low to moderate income, the region needs a greater range of affordable rental housing options. The rental market is not responding to the growing demand for affordable rental housing.

- Average market rent in Durham is \$1,139 – almost a 5 per cent increase from 2016 and well above the provincial rent increase guideline⁵ of 1.5 per cent for 2017.
- A rental household would need to have \$45,560 annual income to afford average market rent at 30 per cent of income. This means that less than half of rental households in Durham can afford average market rent. Further, the average income of applicants on the DASH wait list is only \$17,800, and 64 per cent of non-senior applicants rely on social assistance as their primary source of income (33 per cent on ODSP and 31 per cent on Ontario Works).

⁵ The Rent Increase Guideline is the maximum a landlord can increase most tenants' rent during a year without the approval of the Landlord and Tenant Board.



- About 30 per cent of renters in Durham are in CMHC core housing need⁶ – meaning they live in a unit that is not affordable, not suitable for their family, or in need of major repairs. The vast majority of these households are in core need due to affordability issues.
- Rental housing represented only 8.6 per cent of all housing starts and only 16.38 per cent of all housing completions in 2017. Although this is slightly higher than the 2016 rates, construction is still not sufficient to meet the growth in demand, and new rental units are generally not affordable to low and moderate income renters. Average market rents for units constructed since 2005 are \$1,874 per month.
- Rental vacancy rates in Durham have remained below 2 per cent since 2011.

The Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force has begun work on an implementation plan for its 34 recommendations, including those that support and incent the development of new affordable rental housing in the both the non-profit and private sectors.

How are we doing?

The Region continues to contribute nearly \$34 million annually in Regional funding to support the operations of 44 non-profit housing providers across the region, and to provide long-term rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidy for 4,481 households in Durham. This investment is anticipated to increase to over \$36 million by 2022.

The Region continues to provide temporary, federally and provincially-funded financial housing assistance to address market rent affordability needs for eligible households on the DASH waiting list and in some federal co-ops with expiring operating agreements. In 2017, the Region supported 698 households through a number of programs:

- Durham Housing Benefit (DHB) – 295 households received a flat rate rent supplement between \$200 and \$500 depending on the household's income source.

⁶ CMHC core housing need means that housing falls below one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standard, and the household would have to spend 30 per cent or more of gross income to afford the median rent for alternative housing that meets all standards:

- Adequate dwellings are reported as not requiring major repairs
- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30 per cent of gross income
- Suitable dwellings have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the household.

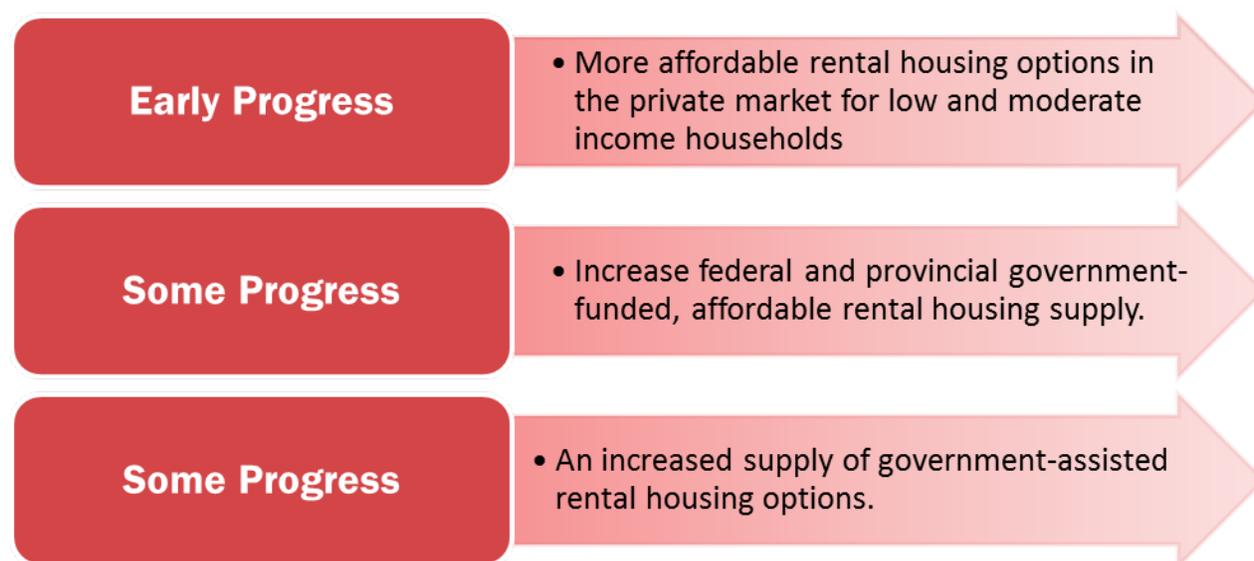


The DHB is paid directly by the Region to the tenant's landlord to reduce the housing charge.

- Durham Housing Benefit (Shared delivery) – the Region has partnerships with eight community agencies to administer the DHB to landlords on behalf of their clients. In 2017, they assisted about 156 households with the DHB, including supports to maintain housing.
- Housing Allowance – 227 households received a portable Housing Allowance through the Ministry of Finance to assist with housing costs.
- Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) – two federal co-ops with expired operating agreement received allocations to support continuing rent subsidy for 20 members over the next five years.

Since 2005, the Region has allocated \$59.9 million in Canada-Ontario Investments in Affordable Housing (IAH) – 2014 Extension and Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) funding for the development of 529 new affordable rental units (by 2019) in both the non-profit and private sector in Durham.

Despite these efforts, affordable rental housing options remain limited for low to moderate income households, and new strategies are required to remove barriers to new development and to provide sustained financial housing assistance for these residents.



2017 Activity highlights

Regional Council approved funding of approximately \$250,000 per year to support new rent-gear-to-income (RGI) subsidies for an additional 30 households. This new Durham Rent Supplement Program is providing greater flexibility in addressing the locally-identified needs of applicants on the DASH wait list. As these subsidies are not subject to restrictive provincial rules under the Housing Services Act, the Region has been able to house a number of applicants who have been on the wait list since the early 2000s. Some of these applicants are experiencing housing stability for the first time in decades.

What's next?

Under the Social Infrastructure Fund – Investment in Affordable Housing Program (SIF-IAH), the Region will be soliciting eligible development proposals for the construction of approximately 16 to 20 new affordable housing units.

In November 2017, the National Housing Strategy (NHS) was introduced which commits \$40 billion in joint federal-provincial spending over the next 10 years. The strategy includes investments to both expand affordable housing, as well as to repair and renew existing social housing, and introduces a new portable Canada Housing Benefit to be developed in conjunction with the provinces. In April 2018, the Province of Ontario and the federal government entered into a bilateral agreement to define a common path and shared roles and responsibilities to deliver sustained and expanded housing affordability in Ontario. The role of the service manager under this new agreement and with respect to the NHS has yet to be defined, but it is critical that the Region of Durham and other service managers continue to engage with federal and provincial governments to ensure new funding supports priorities identified under local housing and homelessness plans, like *At Home in Durham*.

As recommended by the Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force and in line with the principles of the Ontario Fair Housing Plan and the National Housing Strategy, Durham will be exploring opportunities to develop a surplus land inventory of publically owned surplus land in Durham Region and has officially requested that the federal and provincial governments make surplus government land available for social housing purposes.



The recommended 2018 Development Charge (DC) By-law to be considered by Regional Council on June 13, 2018 includes:

- The introduction of a new Regional Residential DC service category (Housing Services) to fund the development of new, growth-related social and government assisted affordable housing projects/units; and
- The deferral of payment of Regional DC by social and government assisted affordable housing projects for up to eighteen months after the first building permit issuance.





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

Strong and vibrant communities reflect the diversity of the people that live there and offer a range of housing options that reflect people's changing needs and a variety of financial circumstances. However, people in Durham currently have limited housing choice in the types of dwellings, and there has been no significant change between 2011 and 2016:

- 67 per cent live in single detached houses
- 5 per cent live in semi-detached houses
- 11 per cent live in a row houses
- 17 per cent live in apartments

Nonetheless, the Region is committed to diverse, integrated communities offering a mix of housing densities, and continues to work to encourage higher density housing within appropriate locations including central areas and adjacent to key transportation corridors. Although about 72 per cent of dwellings are currently low-density, this is projected to decrease to 63 per cent by 2031.

Since 2015, Durham has worked in partnership with the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CELHIN) and other central east Ontario municipalities under the LHIN–Municipal Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Framework to promote collaborative strategic planning, improve co-ordination of service level planning, and align and maximize investment/funding opportunities between the sectors. The Region also continues to work with its community partners to identify opportunities to provide supports for vulnerable residents to allow them to remain in their homes.



How are we doing?

Although most people continue to live in owner-occupied low-density single-detached housing in Durham, the form of the housing supply is changing and it is expected to diversify over the long-term. Although single detached dwellings and other forms of low-density housing will continue to dominate the overall residential land supply, the share of new low-density units is expected to decrease compared to medium and high-density units.

The Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force has begun work on an implementation plan for its 34 recommendations, including those that support and incent the development of diversified housing choices for seniors, as well as new affordable rental housing.

Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) and other non-profit social housing providers continue to explore opportunities to partner with community agencies to provide supports at their properties for their tenants and those in the surrounding communities.

- Community Care Durham (CCD) operates the On-site Assisted Living for At-Risk Seniors (ALS) in 3 DRLHC buildings in Oshawa, Ajax and Whitby.
- Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) provides multidisciplinary mental health on site supports at all DRLHC senior buildings, Ajax Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation (AMHC) and Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation (DRNPHC) properties to assist tenants in integrating with the broader community.

Limited Progress

- More options for affordable housing across the region.

Some Progress

- Higher-density housing options.

Some Progress

- An integrated approach to human services and housing supports for vulnerable people.



2017 Activity highlights

The DRLHC has engaged two new Housing Co-ordinators focussed on community development to work with tenants to stabilize tenancies and promote social participation. The initiative includes active partnerships with numerous community agencies to develop programs, including art classes, fitness classes, income tax clinics and other locally-developed workshops and seminars. The Program is intended to be rolled out to non-profit housing providers following a review of the of the DRLHC initiative.

Habitat for Humanity Durham continues to deliver the Home Ownership program under the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program at their 24 unit Center Towne development in Oshawa. By the end of 2017, 10 affordable home ownership purchases had been closed, and at least 4 more are expected to close by the end of 2018.

What's next?

As a result of the recommendations of the Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force recommendations, the Region has committed \$75,000 to expand housing choices for seniors and incent affordable rental development by exploring opportunities to:

- Develop a surplus land inventory of publically owned surplus land in Durham Region.
- Provide a forum to investigate opportunities for area municipalities to leverage existing planning tools to improve certainty in land use planning that supports the development of affordable rental housing and diversified housing choice (e.g. community planning permit system, pre-zoning and inclusionary zoning).
- Support and encourage area municipalities to provide zoning regulations that further support affordable housing initiatives (e.g. reduced parking requirements, secondary suites) and the use of height and density bonusing to encourage affordable rental housing development.
- Build a public awareness campaign for affordable rental housing and seniors' housing needs and choices.





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

The social housing and non-profit housing sector is vital to rental housing affordability in Durham. The Region has leveraged significant federal-provincial funding over the years to make critical capital investments in the social housing stock, but challenges persist. The significant capital needs of the social housing portfolio and the uncertainty around the Region's long-term funding obligations need to be addressed in partnership with the provincial government in order to ensure the vibrancy of this sector.

As social housing operating agreements and mortgages come to an end, a new framework will be required to sustain the non-profit sector and preserve affordability for low income tenants under the Region's service level standards.

How are we doing?

Most people in Durham live in Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods. However, low and moderate income households and other vulnerable residents continue to struggle. Social and non-profit housing is vital to building housing affordability in the region and contributing to the strong and vibrant neighbourhoods, but ongoing investment is required to sustain these communities.

Since 2005, Durham has successfully leveraged one-time federal and provincial funding commitments totally about \$26.2 million to realize rehabilitation improvements and



energy cost savings in the non-profit social housing sector. The Region continues to advocate for sustained investments from the federal and provincial governments to provide ongoing capital funding for new affordable housing development and critical repair and rehabilitation needs of the aging social housing stock.



2017 Activity highlights

The Region allocated \$384,062 under the Social Housing Electricity Efficiency Program (under the Province’s Climate Change Strategy’s Green Investment Fund) to Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation (DRNPHC) to replace windows in all 44 units at Conant Place in south Oshawa.

Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) funding of \$5,470,800 was allocated to sixteen housing providers for 18 capital repair projects that must be completed no later than March 2019.

What’s next?

The Region has received a conditional allocation of \$14,360,308 under the Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHAIP) for repairs and retrofits to social housing to improve living conditions and adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts. The investment is part of Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan and is funded by



proceeds from the province's cap and trade carbon market. Funds must be invested in programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money on energy costs.

- Year one of this funding was restricted to apartment buildings with more than 150 units. The DRLHC building at 155 King Street, Oshawa was the only property that met these criteria, and was allocated \$3.7 million for retrofit projects that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide improved comfort for residents.
- The Region is currently reviewing social housing proposals for the SHaip allocation for year two to four of the program which is targeted to apartment buildings with between 100 to 150 units.

The Region has received an allocation of \$630,578 under the provincial Green Ontario Fund (GreenON), Social Housing Program. This program targets greenhouse gas emission reductions in apartment buildings with fewer than 100 units. Regional staff are currently reviewing social housing proposals for the GreenON Social Housing program allocation.

Regional Housing and Finance staff continue to engage with other service managers, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Ministry of Housing (MHO) around proposed social housing modernization initiatives.





At Home in Durham – Five-Year Review

At Home in Durham is an integrated housing plan that lays out the Region's long-term vision for housing, 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.

Under the Housing Services Act, the Region of Durham is required to review *At Home in Durham* at least every five years, and amend the plan as it considers necessary or advisable. Prior to any amendments, the Region must consult with the public and give the Ministry of Housing (MHO) 90 days to comment on the proposed amended plan.

The five-year review will ensure that the plan is aligned with the Housing Services Act, consistent with the provincial 2016 Policy Statement Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans, and continues to reflect the local context regarding housing and homelessness.

The review must be initiated before January 1, 2019 and the Region must complete and submit its review report and revised plans to MHO by June 30, 2019 or advise of an alternate date for submission.

The Region is currently undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, including the Durham Housing Strategy. The review of *At Home in Durham* will align with community consultations required under this review, and will incorporate the work of the Affordable and Seniors Housing Task Force in addition to the provincial requirements noted above.

The fifth annual report of *At Home in Durham* in June 2019 will incorporate the results of the legislated five-year review.

