



# 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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*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. It 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.

The four goals of *At Home in Durham* are:

- End Homelessness in Durham
- Affordable Rent for Everyone
- Greater Housing Choice
- Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods.

## **Plan Development**

To develop *At Home in Durham*, the Region initiated a Durham Housing Review — undertaking research on the supply of housing, affordability, demographic trends and the specialized housing needs of its diverse populations. In addition, broad community consultations were held throughout summer and fall 2013 including public workshops, focus group discussions and completion of an online survey.

The four goals of the Durham Housing Plan 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.  
(Note: This was consistently identified as a priority issue in the community consultations and is the primary housing challenge that Durham faces.)

- 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.

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](http://www.durham.ca/housingreview).

### **Strategic Themes, Goals and Actions**

*Growing Together* and the Regional Official Plan give rise to four strategic themes — Strong Partnerships, Diverse & Affordable Housing Supply, Healthy & Complete, Sustainable Communities and Responsible Stewardship — that underpin the four goals of the Durham Housing Plan.

The Region is committed to supporting these themes through a series of goals and actions that will improve affordability and access to housing with and without supports, protect the existing affordable housing supply, encourage housing diversity, and build capacity in the housing system.

**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

### **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, notably the housing development industry

### **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 the Durham Housing Plan.

### **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.

### **Promoting *At Home in Durham*, the Durham Housing Plan**

It is critical that *At Home in Durham* be championed by the Region, area municipalities and other community partners in housing. In order to promote the plan, the Region of Durham will:

- In partnership with area municipalities and community agencies, raise awareness and acceptance of housing for vulnerable people.
- Improve communication to increase public and sector awareness of available programs, supports and services.
- Build on the Social Services Department's commitment to innovation in the delivery of human services.

Durham Region 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.

### **1. PREAMBLE**

Housing is a basic human right. It provides a solid foundation for people to secure employment and raise families, and is essential for mentally, physically, and socially healthy communities. As housing is fundamental to the every-day quality of life of the people living and working in Durham, it is imperative that housing is affordable, and has options to meet the diverse needs of all families and individuals in the region.

*At Home in Durham*, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024, 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 for all Durham residents. It 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.

Fundamentally, the aim of *At Home in Durham* is to make certain there is enough affordable housing, of appropriate size, type, quality and location, to meet the needs of all people that choose to call Durham their home.

### **2. DURHAM REGION HOUSING CONTEXT**

The Regional Municipality of Durham is a vibrant and growing region that includes a diverse mix of urban and rural areas. The majority of the population and housing in the region is concentrated in distinct urban areas along the Lake Ontario shoreline, while the more northerly communities comprise small towns, villages and hamlets. The region consists of the cities of Oshawa and Pickering, the towns of Ajax and Whitby, the Municipality of Clarington and the townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge. All of Durham's communities share a commitment to maintaining long-term sustainability and a rich quality of life.

Durham Region is home to more than 608,000 (2011) residents, with a population estimated to grow to approximately 860,500 by 2024 and 1,190,000 by 2041.

The region's geographic location within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), relative housing affordability, and highly developed energy, transportation, communications and social infrastructures, contribute to a high quality of life and underpin significant short and long-term economic growth potential.

Durham has maintained the lowest average price of new single detached dwellings (\$507,988<sup>1</sup>) compared to other areas of the GTA. As Durham and the rest of the GTA continue to experience consistent population growth, the competitive price of housing will be one of the factors that make Durham an attractive place to live.

Despite the strength and affordability of the supply of ownership housing in Durham, low and moderate income residents face significant challenges finding and maintaining affordable housing — particularly in the rental market. In 2011, only 17.3 per cent of the housing supply in Durham is rental, and of this only 35 per cent is purpose-built as suitable and affordable to low and moderate income households.

*At Home in Durham*, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024, will address the challenges and opportunities in providing suitable and affordable housing options that meet the needs of Durham's current and future residents.

### **3. THE DURHAM HOUSING PLAN**

#### **3.1 Vision, Mission and Strategic Themes**

*Growing Together*, the Durham Region Strategic Plan 2009-2014, establishes a common vision and sets out priorities and goals that promote the growth of a stronger, more sustainable Region — including the promotion of a safe, healthy, caring, inclusive community through the development of a broad range of affordable housing.

The Regional Official Plan establishes the broad policy framework for managing the growth and development of the region and includes policies supporting improved quality of life. A fundamental goal of the Regional Official Plan is to create healthy and complete, sustainable communities by encouraging a wide range of housing opportunities commensurate with the social and economic needs of present and future residents.

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<sup>1</sup> CMHC. January 2014. Housing Now – GTA (Dec. 2013 year-to-date).

*Growing Together* and the Regional Official Plan have guided the development of the Durham Housing Plan, and as such, this plan builds on the vision and themes set out in both documents.

### **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.

*Growing Together* and the Regional Official Plan give rise to the following four strategic themes that underpin the Durham Housing Plan's goals and actions, which address the current and future housing needs in our urban and rural communities:

#### **Strong Partnerships:**

- Increase and strengthen intergovernmental co-operation and partnerships, including the sharing of resources.
- Increase and strengthen ties with community partners.
- Foster new partnerships and identify community champions for affordable housing.

#### **Diverse and Affordable Housing Supply:**

- Develop a broad range of affordable ownership and rental housing.
- Provide for safe and secure housing.
- Provide housing options to meet needs of people at any age and level of ability.

### **Healthy and Complete, Sustainable Communities:**

- Meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing a full range of housing and community infrastructure including affordable housing.
- Strengthen accessibility to appropriate services and supports that respond to the needs of a diverse community, including people with disabilities, youth and an aging population.
- Ensure convenient access to public transportation and options for safe travel.

### **Responsible Stewardship:**

- Preserve Durham's strong fiscal position and administrative excellence.
- Strengthen and simplify access to human services administered by the Region.
- Strengthen governance and capacity in the non-profit housing sector.
- Demonstrate leadership in environmental sustainability and energy conservation.

## **3.2 Plan Development Process**

*At Home in Durham* has been developed under the leadership of the Housing Services and Planning divisions and the Finance Department of the Region. It is the result of extensive research and analysis of demographic and socio-economic trends and community consultations.

The Region initiated the Durham Housing Review 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. It includes extensive research on the supply of housing, affordability, demographic trends and the specialized housing needs of diverse populations — including people who are homeless, victims of domestic violence, seniors, youth, students, and residents with mental, developmental and physical disabilities.

In summer 2013, broad consultations were held with Durham residents, elected officials, staff, social and community agencies, education and health care sectors, non-profit and co-operative housing providers, other levels of government and other partners in housing. These consultations took the form of public community workshops, focus group discussions and an online survey.

The findings from the Durham Housing Review and community consultations are provided in the following five background reports, available on the Region of Durham's web site at [www.durham.ca/housingreview](http://www.durham.ca/housingreview):

*Background Report No. 1 - Housing Policy Context, Trends and Indicators (2010)*

*Background Report No. 2 - Supply of Housing and Development Activity (2010)*

*Background Report No. 3 - Housing Affordability (2011)*

*Background Report No. 4 - Specialized Housing Needs (2012)*

*Background Report No. 5 - Community Consultations (2014)*

*At Home in Durham* also complements other housing and homelessness planning activities, including:

- the Community Plan for Homelessness in Durham (2011-2014)
- the Annual Review of Regional Housing Programs and Related Financial Analysis for the Business Plan and Four Year Forecast (the Housing Servicing and Financing Study)
- previous policy reviews including the Regional Chair's Task Force on Sustainable/ Affordable Housing (2001)

### **3.3 Durham Housing Plan Goals**

The goals of the Durham Housing Plan 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. This was consistently identified as a priority issue in the community consultations and is the primary housing challenge that Durham faces.
- 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 service for people who are homeless, youth, people with disabilities (physical, mental and developmental), victims of domestic violence and seniors.

The Region is committed to supporting these goals through a series of actions that will improve affordability and access to housing with and without supports, protect the existing affordable housing supply, encourage housing diversity, and build capacity in the housing system.

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 IN DURHAM**

**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN DURHAM REGION:**

- There are eight facilities providing emergency housing with a total of 196 beds of which 93 are emergency hostel beds; 90 beds for women fleeing family violence; and 13 domiciliary hostel beds.
- More than 1,200 households used the Region's emergency hostels and motel program in 2012.
- On average about 2,785 households in Durham annually access homelessness programs, such as outreach support, eviction prevention and client service supports, which help to stabilize households at risk of losing their housing.
- Almost 70 per cent of households using homeless supports are single people. For those family households requiring supports, the majority are lone parent households with one or two children.
- About 27.6 per cent of households that accessed homelessness supports in 2011 identified mental health (18.5 per cent) and substance abuse (9.1 per cent) as contributing factors.
- Eviction prevention programs are substantially more successful in meeting the needs of people at risk of homelessness (87 per cent success rate) than are supports to find accommodation once the household becomes homeless (57 per cent success rate).
- There is limited transitional housing available in Durham; 28 beds with limited supports for residents.
- There is no single coordinating body for all areas of support, and the inventory of supportive housing and housing with supports is incomplete. As a result, the approach to supportive housing in Durham is somewhat fragmented.



**WHAT WE WILL DO TO END HOMELESSNESS IN DURHAM REGION:**

**GOAL 1: END HOMELESSNESS IN DURHAM REGION**

**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.

**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.

**WE WILL MEASURE OUR PROGRESS TOWARD ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN DURHAM BY MONITORING:**

- Number of households using shelters more than once annually.
- Number of homeless people who obtain housing and remain housed for a minimum of six months.
- Number of people at risk of homelessness who receive supports and retain housing for a minimum of six months.
- Percentage of homelessness programming resources allocated to housing retention.
- Number of DRLHC evictions.
- Number of social and affordable housing providers with eviction prevention policies.
- Number of Special Priority applicants housed from the waiting list.

**GOAL 2: AFFORDABLE RENT FOR EVERYONE**

**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT RENTAL AFFORDABILITY IN DURHAM REGION:**

- A lack of safe affordable rental housing across the region was identified as the top housing issue in Durham Region during the community consultations.
- A greater share of renters struggle with housing affordability as their income is about half of homeowners' income.
- There is a lack of affordable rental housing options for persons with low income, in particular for non-senior single people and those requiring support services to maintain their tenancies.
- About 45 per cent of all renters in Durham experience affordability issues, spending more than 30 per cent of their household income on housing; of this total, about 20 per cent of renters spend more than 50 per cent of their household income on housing.
- A low proportion of lone-parent families can afford rental housing, with only 24 per cent able to afford a three-bedroom unit.
- Single-person, renter households face the most significant rental affordability issues, with less than half (48 per cent) able to afford even a basic bachelor unit.
- The incidence of low income among Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, youth and vulnerable populations with distinct housing needs is higher than the Regional average incidence of low income.
- There are more than 5,000 applicants on the waiting list for social housing in Durham and wait times have increased steadily over the last six years.
- Post-secondary institutions in Oshawa project significant student population growth—560 per cent increase at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology by 2030 and a combined 136 per cent increase at Durham College (Oshawa) and the Trent University campus—in addition to growth due to campus expansions in other communities within the region.

**WHAT WE WILL DO TO MAKE HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR ALL RENTERS IN DURHAM REGION:**

**GOAL 2: AFFORDABLE RENT FOR EVERYONE**

**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.

**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.

### **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-gear-to-income units within Durham.
- Leverage available provincial and federal funding to support ongoing rent assistance for low-income households.

### **WE WILL MEASURE OUR PROGRESS TOWARD MAKING HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR ALL RENTERS IN DURHAM BY MONITORING:**

- Number of renters with severe affordability problems (spending more than 50 per cent of household income on housing).
- Number of renters with moderate affordability problems (spending more than 30 per cent of household income on housing).
- Number of households receiving assistance with their housing costs.
- Number of rental housing units affordable to low and moderate income households.
- Number of new private rental housing units developed.
- Number of new government-funded, affordable housing units developed.
- Rental market vacancy rates.

**GOAL 3: GREATER HOUSING CHOICE**

**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HOUSING CHOICES IN DURHAM:**

- Durham has a relatively high percentage of home ownership when compared to Ontario and the other four GTA municipalities. In 2011, owner-occupied dwellings comprised 82.7 per cent of Durham's housing stock; only York (88.5 per cent) and Halton (83.1 per cent) had a higher percentage of owner-occupied dwellings in the GTA. As of 2006, the vast majority (95.7 per cent) of single detached dwellings were owner-occupied, while just over half (53.9 per cent) of other dwelling types (semi-detached, row house and apartment units) were owner-occupied.
- Although low-density housing is still the dominant form, the trend towards smaller average household sizes has resulted in an increasing share of medium to high-density housing, primarily in the form of row housing.
- There has been little increase in the supply of rental housing during the last decade; between 2000 and 2009, rental housing represented less than 1 per cent of new housing units built in Durham; new investment in affordable housing by the federal and provincial governments from 1995 to 2011 has been very low — 299 units (completed and under construction) with an additional 50-67 units scheduled for future development.
- Rental vacancy rates declined from 2006 to 2012 from 3.91 per cent to 2.1 per cent, which significantly impacts the availability of rental housing.
- The population is aging. Almost one-quarter of Durham residents are aged 55 and older (24.1 per cent). This cohort is projected to increase to almost one-third of the population by 2031.
- Pre-retirement adults and seniors overwhelmingly live in one and two person households and reside in single-detached dwellings. However, the propensity to rent, as well as downsize dwellings, increases with age.

- People with physical disabilities make up 7.6 per cent of Durham's population (2006). Demographic analysis of people with physical difficulties demonstrates a need for accessible and affordable housing opportunities in both rental and homeownership.
- The majority of recent immigrant and Aboriginal-led households are comprised of couples with children, with a household size of two to four persons.
- Youth face significant challenges finding and sustaining housing in the community. In 2012, 436 youth accessed emergency shelter services, with a total of 737 admissions. About 59 per cent of youth stayed in shelters more than once.

**WHAT WE WILL DO TO PROVIDE GREATER HOUSING CHOICE IN DURHAM:**

**GOAL 3: GREATER HOUSING CHOICE**

**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.

**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.



**WE WILL MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN PROVIDING GREATER HOUSING CHOICE IN DURHAM BY MONITORING:**

- Inventory of rental units per size, type and area municipality.
- Development of new residential units, within an Urban Area built boundary, resulting in intensification.
- Number of new secondary or garden suites created.
- Number of rental units modified for accessibility.
- Number of transitional housing units for at-risk youth.

**GOAL 4: STRONG AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS**

**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT NEIGHBOURHOODS IN DURHAM:**

- Despite steady growth in population and households, the region is experiencing a reduction in the average household size, due in part to more individuals living alone or outside of traditional family households.
- The number of households is forecast to increase from more than 214,000 (2011) to approximately 356,600 in 2031.
- Although the majority of Durham's housing stock was built within the past 30 years, the majority of rental units (about 64 per cent) were built prior to 1980.
- Rental stock is in greater need of repair (20 per cent of the current rental stock as opposed to only 2 per cent of owner-occupied dwellings) and will require significant capital investment during the next 10 years.
- About 6,374 social housing units in Durham are under Regional administration. This represents roughly 31 per cent of the total rental supply in Durham. The Region also funds about 690 rent supplement units; and there are an additional 858 co-operative housing units under federal government administration.
- Approximately 12 per cent of the total social housing stock in Durham is suitable for single non-seniors and less than 3 per cent of the social housing stock is suitable for larger families.
- Future household growth will be accommodated in Durham's urban areas to utilize existing urban infrastructure, particularly within the region's Lake Ontario shoreline municipalities.

**WHAT WE WILL DO TO BUILD STRONG AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS:**

**GOAL 4: STRONG AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS**

**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.

**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 co-operative housing providers to strengthen their capacity to effectively manage their housing communities, and to develop long-term asset-management and financial strategies.

### **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.

### **WE WILL MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN BUILDING STRONG AND VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS IN DURHAM BY MONITORING:**

- Number of affordable housing units supported or improved under the Regional Revitalization Program.
- Number of existing rental units converted to condominium ownership.
- Number of building condition assessments.
- Number of social housing providers identified as a project in difficulty.

#### **4. EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY**

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. Each partner plays a unique role in the Durham Housing Plan.

##### **4.1 The roles of the federal and provincial governments**

The federal and provincial governments have an ongoing obligation to provide the necessary resources to create housing opportunities for all residents. The roles of the senior levels of government are to:

- Set out the legislative and policy framework to address housing needs.
- Provide adequate, stable, long-term sustainable funding and support for housing programs and services.
- Conduct research 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 Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) sets out the housing and homelessness strategy for Ontario. However, there continue to be significant issues in provincial policy and legislation that can impede the success of the Durham Housing Plan.

In collaboration with partners, such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO), the Service Manager Housing Network (SMHN) and other sector organizations, the Region of Durham will continue to advocate for the federal and provincial governments to bring their financial and legislative resources to bear in addressing housing issues across the region, Ontario and Canada.

Potential critical actions for the federal and provincial governments, as suggested by community consultations, are as follows:

### **Critical actions for the federal government**

(as identified in community consultations)

- In order to build a housing system that meets the needs of all residents, a national housing strategy must be developed in consultation with provincial, territorial and municipal leaders.
- The federal government must commit to provide ongoing, predictable funding for existing and future affordable rental housing.

### **Critical actions for the provincial government**

(as identified in community consultations)

- The Government of Ontario must commit to provide ongoing predictable funding for existing and future affordable rental housing.
- The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) definition of “affordable” housing must be revised to address households with severe affordability problems.
- The Government of Ontario must develop enabling legislation that permits “inclusionary zoning” – e.g. requiring new development to provide a percentage of affordable housing.
- There must be more co-ordinated planning and resource allocation at the provincial level with greater financial assistance, including financial supports for renovations to improve accessibility and to address the gaps in housing supports and services.
- The Government of Ontario must increase Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP) payments and minimum wage to enable low-and moderate-income households to afford average housing costs in their communities.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through the Local Health Integration Networks and the Ministry of Community and Social Services must more effectively align local funding and other resources.
- The Government of Ontario must explore and implement other strategies to house victims of domestic violence outside of the existing social housing stock.

### **4.2 The roles of the Region**

*Growing Together* and the Regional Official Plan guide the Region of Durham's roles in housing as service manager, housing facilitator, researcher, monitor and social housing provider. Specifically, the Region of Durham:

- Implements the vision of the Regional Official Plan, managing growth in partnership with area municipalities.
- Owns and operates social and affordable housing through the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC).
- Partners with non-profit and cooperative housing providers to administer social and affordable housing programs across the region.
- Operates the waiting list for social housing in the region.
- Funds and administers a range of community-based programs and services for low-income households, including homelessness supports and emergency shelters.

The Durham Housing Plan will reinforce these roles, and build on the Region's commitment to service excellence, co-operation and leadership.

### **4.3 The roles of the area municipalities**

The eight area municipalities — Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby — are key partners in ensuring safe and affordable housing in our communities. They are responsible for:

- Implementation of the Region's minimum target for affordable housing units produced within each area municipality.
- Local planning and development approvals, including incentives for the development of affordable housing.
- Zoning by-laws, including those that permit secondary and garden suites.
- Property standards and local by-law enforcement.

Area municipalities are key partners in anticipating and monitoring the unique housing needs of their communities, including student housing and challenges and opportunities in rural areas.

The Region of Durham will work with the area municipalities to ensure successful implementation of the Durham Housing Plan in all communities across the region.

#### **4.4 The roles of community partners**

The Region of Durham partners with a number of non-profit agencies and non-profit and co-operative housing providers to provide a range of community-based programs, and social and affordable housing options, for low and moderate income households and for people with disabilities.

The Region of Durham and its community partners will support the implementation of the goals and actions in the Durham Housing Plan through active engagement in the following existing advisory groups:

- Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH)
- Social Housing Advisory Group (SHAG)

#### **4.5 The roles of the private sector**

The housing development industry is a key partner in the development of affordable housing. In partnership with the Region of Durham and area municipalities, the housing development industry may:

- inform regional and local land use planning
- build new affordable housing units
- provide opportunities for innovative financing options.

The Region of Durham, in collaboration with the area municipalities, will continue to engage the private sector, including landlords, developers and investors, in working toward the housing goals set out in Official Plans and the Durham Housing Plan.

### **5. POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

*At Home in Durham* is an extension of the Region's commitment to affordable housing set out in *Growing Together* and the Regional Official Plan. It proposes key actions to meet the following goals:



- End Homelessness in Durham
- Affordable Rent for Everyone
- Greater Housing Choice
- Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods.

Grounded in the principles of “Housing First”, these goals 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.

With a commitment of sustained, long-term funding from the federal and provincial governments, the Durham Housing Plan offers a foundation for more locally responsive, integrated and accountable services with respect to housing and homelessness in the region. During the next 10 years, the Durham community can expect the following outcomes:

### **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.

## **5.1 Performance Measures**

*At Home in Durham* will be supported by an implementation plan to uphold the goals and primary actions outlined in this 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 on achievements.

In order to track progress in meeting local needs, the Region of Durham will provide annual progress reports to the public, including local metrics and the

results of the pending provincial Tenant Satisfaction Survey for social housing residents.

The Region of Durham will work with its community partners, including local post-secondary institutions, to:

- Further develop the measures set out in Section 3.3 for each of the four Durham Housing Plan goals.
- Evaluate the housing and homelessness initiatives undertaken as part of the plan.
- Support the continued improvement of the Durham Housing Plan.

### **5.2 Promoting *At Home in Durham*, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024**

The success of *At Home in Durham* is contingent on the strength and commitment of all housing partners. Of critical importance is the need for the federal and provincial governments to make long-term funding commitments to support local planning and service delivery related to housing and homelessness.

It is also essential that *At Home in Durham* be championed by the Region, area municipalities and other community partners in housing. In order to promote the plan, the Region of Durham will:

- In partnership with area municipalities and community agencies, raise awareness and acceptance of housing for vulnerable people.
- Improve communication to increase public and sector awareness of available programs, supports and services.
- Build on the Social Services Department's commitment to innovation in the delivery of human services.

During the course of the consultations, much was heard about the importance of partnerships — building on existing partnerships and cultivating new ones. Durham Region values its partners in housing and will continue to work with them during the term of the Durham Housing Plan to ensure that everyone is at home in Durham.

## 6. GLOSSARY

**Aboriginal people:** refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e., North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act of Canada*, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian Band or First Nation (Statistics Canada Census).

**Affordable housing:** means:

- a) In the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:
  - i. Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households.
  - ii. Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 per cent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the region.
- b) In the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:
  - i. A unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households.
  - ii. A unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the region (Durham Regional Official Plan).

**Affordability issue/problem:** refers to households spending more than 30 per cent of their household income on housing (moderate affordability issue/problem: 30 per cent to 49 per cent; severe affordability issue/problem: 50 per cent or more).

**Brownfield site:** refers to undeveloped or previously developed property that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant (Durham Regional Official Plan).

**Family households:** refers to either a “one family household” consisting of a single family household (e.g. a couple with or without children or a lone-parent family), or a “multiple family household” consisting of two or more families occupying the same dwelling (Statistics Canada Census).

**GTA:** Greater Toronto Area refers to the regions of Durham, York, Peel and Halton and the City of Toronto.

**Healthy and Complete, Sustainable Communities:** means communities where:

- a) People's needs for daily living are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing (including affordable housing), schools, recreation, open space, and community infrastructure and alternative transportation options through transit-supportive development.
- b) There is an appropriate ratio of population to jobs.
- c) Decisions are based on integrating social, economic and environmental considerations.
- d) People can live, work and play in a safe, vibrant, healthy and prosperous environment (Durham Regional Official Plan).

**High-density housing:** includes all high-rise apartments and any dwelling units, attached to other dwelling units or other non-residential space, not already included in the definitions below for low and medium-density households.

**Housing costs:** refers to the allocation of average monthly household income, which is spent on the owner's major payments (including mortgage, heating, municipal services, property taxes and condominium fees, where applicable) or on gross rent (including rent, heating and municipal services).

**Housing First:** is a policy where vulnerable and at-risk households are first given permanent housing (rather than temporary transitional facilities) and then support services.

**Incidence of Low Income:** refers to the percentage share of households experiencing "low income before tax cut-offs" (LICOs) status. LICOs refers to income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend 20 per cent more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing (Statistics Canada Census).

**Intensification:** means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a) Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- b) The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- c) Infill development; and
- d) The expansion or conversion of existing buildings (Durham Regional Official Plan).

**Lone parent:** refers to a mother or a father, with no spouse or common law partner present, living in a dwelling with one or more children (Statistics Canada Census).

**Low and moderate income [households]:** means:

- a) In the case of ownership housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for the region.
- b) In the case of rental housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of income of the income distribution for renter households for the region (Durham Regional Official Plan).

**Low-density housing:** includes all single and semi-detached homes, as well as “other” detached homes, as defined by Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada Census).

**Medium-density units:** includes all townhomes and apartments in duplexes.

**Social housing:** or non-profit and co-operative housing, refers to affordable housing owned and managed by municipal government or community-based organizations, which was developed with government subsidies and typically receives ongoing subsidies to operate. It provides housing mostly for people whose income, age, social needs or health prevent them from finding adequate housing in the private rental market.

**Supported housing:** is housing where support services are provided by a community agency support service worker who visits the resident in their home to provide service.

**Supportive housing:** refers to housing that is integrated with support services (often on site) to meet the needs of individuals who require specific services to maintain their well-being and housing.

**Youth:** refers to persons aged 15 to 24.





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