

2017

Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) Report Card



Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2014-2024

Status update 2017

Under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, municipalities such as Halton Region are legislated to have a 10-year housing and homelessness plan that serves as a roadmap to address local housing matters. In 2006, Halton Region developed the Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS), recognizing that regional stewardship requires a housing roadmap.

The CHS was updated in 2014 to align strategic actions going forward (with a 10-year horizon) and to ensure that the CHS responds to provincial requirements. One of these requirements is that the Region reports annually about the status of the directions articulated in the plan. The overview in this section is created for this purpose.

The CHS update 2014-2024 is built on five strategic directions with a view to:


- create a range and mix of new housing opportunities to meet the needs of the Halton community;
- protect existing rental housing so that it continues to be available to Halton residents; and
- provide coordinated services to residents who need support to obtain or maintain their housing.


Underpinning this work, Halton Region identified a 10-year target for the creation of 550 to 900 new housing opportunities, with the understanding that the upper limit can only be achieved with additional funding from the Federal and Provincial governments.

Direction 1:

Promote healthy and complete communities with an adequate mix/variety of housing and capacity to meet housing and human service needs

ACTION

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| 1.1 | Through policy and initiatives, provide a full range of housing that meets the needs of residents in all stages of their lives |  Achieved through ongoing implementation of Regional Official Plan policies and through review of Local Official Plan amendments

Action will focus on ongoing implementation of Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 38 (ROPA 38) at the local municipal level |
| 1.2 | Work with Local Municipalities to develop, implement, and promote land use policies and initiatives to meet the changing housing and service needs of residents |  Achieved through ongoing implementation of Regional Official Plan policies and through review of Local Official Plan amendments

Halton's Official Plan Review (currently in Phase 2) will continue to consider policies in support of this action |

Direction 2:

Encourage and protect affordable housing through a policy framework that responds to changes in housing trends and stimulates the creation of affordable housing across Halton Region

ACTION

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| 2.1 | Monitor the Halton Housing “thermometer” and housing thresholds for affordable housing through the annual State of Housing Report | ✓ | 49.9% of new house sales and assisted units in 2017 fell within Halton’s Affordability Target (an increase from 34.1% reported in 2016)
Official Plan target: at least 30% of new housing is to be affordable or assisted (\$362,950 or less as per 2017 State of Housing Report) |
| 2.2a | Ensure policies provide a range of affordable medium and high density housing | ✓ | 71.2% of new housing completed in 2017 was in the form of townhouses or multi-storey buildings (apartments). This is up from 62.2% reported in 2016.
Official Plan target: at least 50% of new housing produced is to be townhouse and multi-storey |
| 2.2b | Partner with Local Municipalities to prepare Community Improvement Plans (CIP) that support increased supply of assisted, affordable or special needs housing | ✓ | A policy framework for participation in local CIPs was approved in 2016 (LPS94-16), and is currently being implemented with the Local Municipalities |

Direction 3:

Encourage and protect assisted housing through a sustainable housing program aimed at creating new supply and protecting the existing assisted housing stock

ACTION

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| 3.1a | Implement a program to create additional government assisted housing units for Halton residents | ✓ | 184 new housing opportunities were created in 2017. This includes 35 new capital units (18 rental units to be developed by Habitat for Humanity and 17 units under Halton’s Second Unit Pilot Program) |
| 3.1b | Implement an In-situ program to provide rent assistance to qualified Halton residents where they currently reside | ✓ | In 2017, an additional 70 Halton residents received Halton In-situ portable housing benefits to bring the overall total to 299 and growing as of December 31, 2017 |
| 3.1c | Continue to advocate for and participate in any future Federal/Provincial housing programs | ✓ | In 2017, Halton Region submitted a successful competitive proposal to receive annual funding for Housing First programming through the Ministry of Housing’s new Home for Good initiative
✓ In 2017, Halton Region participated in the consultation process for the new National Housing Strategy and renewed Federal investment in homelessness through a relaunch of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy in 2019 |

3.2	Develop a strategy to retain assisted housing projects beyond the expiry of current funding agreements	✓	<p>Halton End of Operating Agreement (EOA) approach implemented - Strategy focused on working with Halton housing providers with upcoming expiry of current funding agreements to ensure housing stock continues to be available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing discussions with former Federal providers whose mortgages have expired to enter into agreements to preserve stock of social housing post mortgage maturity • Halton's legislated service level standard for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) occupancies is 2,953. Halton currently assists 3,172 RGI occupancies through housing stock operated by social housing providers (not including rent supplements)
3.3a	Develop a Long Term Capital Needs Strategy to ensure the current housing stock operated by social housing providers remains viable	✓	<p>Long Term Capital Needs Strategy implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis undertaken and Capital Financial Plan prepared in 2016. Ongoing process reviewed annually for updating • Building Condition Assessments were undertaken in all social housing sites in the fall of 2017. Reports are expected second quarter of 2018 and further analysis of the housing stock will be undertaken
3.3b	Ensure that housing providers have a multi-year financial plan for preventative maintenance, identifying required expenses and sources of financing	✓	<p>Multi-year financing plans developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Condition Assessments were completed in 2017 in all social housing sites and include a multi-year reserve fund study • Housing Services Program Directive No. 4 requires housing providers to submit five-year capital plans to the service manager for review every year with their subsidy request
3.4a	Investigate opportunities for the intensification and redevelopment of existing Halton Community Housing Corporation (HCHC) properties	✓	<p>Regional staff continue to review the 2014 Rationalization, Feasibility & Assessment Study of HCHC non-profit and public housing stock to consider potential future redevelopment opportunities</p>
3.4b	Require that housing proponents follow Halton Region's Assisted Housing Design Guidelines (including accessibility and green building policies)	✓	<p>Housing design guidelines are in place and being updated to reflect changes to the Ontario Building Code, effective 2017</p>
3.5a	Enhance efficiency of the Halton Access to Community Housing (HATCH) waitlist process	✓	<p>Various process improvements implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New applicants wishing to apply to HATCH can now complete an online request form to receive all HATCH related applications • Streamlined the Support Services application process to improve access for applicants requesting Assistance with Daily Living • Improved partnerships with external community organizations including violence against women shelters to streamline application process • HATCH applicants that have been granted Special Priority Policy (SPP) status for fleeing domestic violence can now access an immediate portable monthly housing benefit • Halton continues to be involved in the Housing Consortium Initiative developing a new online application for HATCH

3.5b	Implement a Housing Help service to assist Halton residents with their housing and support service needs	✓	<p>2017 achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,920 clients served in 2017, including 258 receiving intensive customized supports • Halton Housing Help continues to work with community partners looking for affordable private market accommodations for their clients
3.6a	Utilize tools to involve the private and non-profit sectors in the provision of assisted housing	✓	<p>The Region adopted a new Residential DC Deferral Policy to allow for the deferral of DCs for up to 10 years, for Purpose Built Rental housing that is being built by an agency that is receiving government assistance to build the housing (for example, Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) funding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further, a policy framework to provide DC deferral for not-for-profit Assisted Homeownership was also approved, with a final policy to be provided to Council at a later date
3.6b	Engage the private-sector in the development of assisted housing	✓	<p>Issuance of Request for Expression of Interest for potential new, purpose-built affordable/assisted housing development in Halton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to fund development of 18 government-assisted rental units in Burlington (Habitat for Humanity)
3.6c	Build capacity of Halton's non-profit housing and volunteer sectors, by providing networking and training opportunities that support good governance and best practices	✓	<p>First Housing and Homelessness Summit held in October, 2016 brought together community partners from across the full housing continuum to initiate discussions on the development of a more robust planning and housing policy system grounded in an evidence-based approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton hosted the second annual Housing and Homelessness Summit in October 2017 and brought together community partners from across the housing continuum to increase collaboration • Housing Provider sessions included Building Conditions Assessments and the Housing Collaborative Initiative • Hosted Social Housing Modernization consultations with housing providers in Halton

3.6d Invite off-reserve Aboriginal organizations serving Aboriginal people living in Halton to participate in community capacity building efforts



- Meetings held with the Aboriginal Justice Society and Halton Community Legal Services to grow community capacity building efforts
- Housing Services supported Halton Community Legal Services in a successful application to the Federal Government to research, conduct focus groups and enact an action plan around Indigenous housing/homelessness issues in Halton Region. A preliminary report entitled “Home is Where Community Is” has been published by the Homeless Hub
 - Homelessness Action Table incorporated Indigenous specific definition of homelessness as part of official plan Terms of Reference
 - Halton Housing Help onboarded a specialist with a background in indigenous housing and homelessness to provide culturally appropriate support
 - Assisted Halton Community Legal Services with conducting focus groups for agency management staff on indigenous-specific cultural competency at Homelessness Action Table
 - Through formal Request for Proposal process, continue to encourage agency staff delivering homelessness services in Halton to employ staff with cultural competency in indigenous-specific supports and services

Direction 4:

Supporting independent living through increased availability of supportive and accessible housing

ACTION

4.1 Require that the Halton Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee (HRAAC) be consulted when Regionally funded assisted housing is constructed or renovated



A consultation process is in place, associated with periodic review of Assisted Housing Design Guidelines. A periodic review is being planned with HRAAC in 2018

4.2 Explore opportunities to expand assisted living capacity within Halton Community Housing Corporation (HCHC) properties



Review for additional opportunities is ongoing, following enhancements implemented in 2014

Assisted living is funded by the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). The assisted living program is looking at ways to best support complex clients, for example, enhanced hours, and will continue to adapt the program to best serve the needs of complex clients

- Discussions ongoing with both LHINs covering Halton Region on potential to provide health/support services in HCHC communities

4.3 Implement Compliance Review Protocols for Housing with Related Supports Providers (formerly Domiciliary Hostels)



New Compliance Review Template and Standards developed. A ranking system was implemented to identify critical areas that require compliance and identify best practices

- Formal policies also implemented for Quality of Life, Enhancement Funding Initiative and Client Intake and Financial Eligibility

4.4a	Develop a comprehensive inventory of programs and support services available to improve awareness and access	✓	Halton Housing Help inventory of available community programs and services has been enhanced
4.4b	Ensure housing providers continue to meet <i>Special Priority Policy (SPP)</i> requirements and work to better coordinate support services to <i>SPP</i> clients	✓	Conduct annual Rent-Geared-to Income (RGI) and waitlist reviews – includes SPP compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered portable housing benefits to 89 Special Priority (SPP) clients and their families immediately removing them from harm's way
4.4c	Additional initiatives to enhance supportive housing capacity	✓	Halton Housing First collaborative partnership between Wesley Urban Ministries, Halton Housing Help, and Bridging the Gap increased by 14 units of supportive housing for chronically homeless households

Direction 5:

Continue to assist Halton residents to maintain their housing and prevent homelessness

ACTION

5.1a	Continue to advocate for and participate in any future federal and provincial homelessness programs	✓	Enhanced funding agreement with the federal government for Homelessness Partnering Strategy signed in 2017. A three-year incremental enhancement to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) received (Year 2 rollout April 1, 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with Service Canada and the Ministry of Housing, Regional staff and Halton Housing Help have planned to train and mobilize agency staff and community volunteers in preparation for 2018 Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness. New partnerships including four community events at faith-based groups across Halton, Joseph Brant Hospital, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital and Maplehurst Correctional Facility will provide new perspective on data for individuals experiencing homelessness in Halton
5.1b	Develop a strategy to assist Halton residents to retain and regain housing	✓	Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Investment plan approved by Council annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton's Housing First Program housed 23 chronically homeless households in 2017, up from nine in 2016
5.2a	Reduce eviction for those who cannot pay their utilities and/or rent and are at risk of losing their housing	✓	Ongoing implementation of Halton's Housing Stability Fund to proactively meet the needs of vulnerable Halton residents Assistance provided in 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,746 housing crisis situations were resolved through outreach and funding, including rental deposits, rental arrears, utility cost arrears, eviction, moving/storage costs and provision of essential furniture/beds

5.2b Develop a new funding model for emergency shelter programs to improve service delivery and reduce the use of motels and hotels through more effective emergency shelter options



Ongoing implementation of new emergency shelter agreements (including fixed cost model and streamlined service delivery)

- Ongoing mitigation of the Region's use of hotels/motels by an increased stock of Emergency Family apartments in 2017
 - New service delivery partners for Family Shelter resulted in process improvements to more effectively prevent homelessness and promote rapid shelter exits. Sixty-five families permanently housed with an additional 80 households diverted from shelter by providing case management in their homes
 - Received Provincial funding to provide housing supports to seven survivors of human trafficking through the Halton Coalition Against Human Trafficking
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