

HOUSING SOLUTIONS

A place for everyone

2019 AND 2020 PROGRESS REPORT

ATTACHMENT 1



Housing York Inc.'s
Woodbridge Lane, City of Vaughan

HOUSING SERVICES
york.ca/housing


York Region



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City of Markham



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A Message from York Region Chairman and CEO and Members of Regional Council

York Regional Council is committed to building complete communities with a full range of housing options and services to support residents at all ages and stages of their lives. This commitment includes investing in affordable housing and working with community partners to build a system of supports to help people find and keep housing.

This progress report highlights key actions that were completed over 2019 and 2020 to advance the three goals of Housing Solutions, York Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Housing is a key social determinant of health and the COVID-19 pandemic created new housing challenges. This report also highlights how York Region, in collaboration with a broad range of community partners and with financial support from the province, is acting to support individuals experiencing homelessness and individuals who needed to safely shelter in place.

Sustained federal and provincial investment is essential in working towards the goal of increasing the supply of affordable rental housing, supporting people to find and keep housing and strengthening the housing and homelessness system.

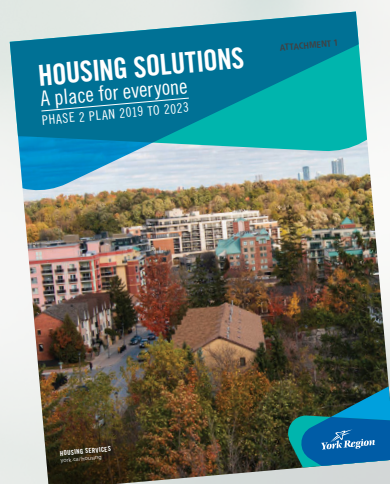
Together with our partners, York Region remains focused on helping residents find and keep appropriate housing, aligning with our vision to create strong, caring and safe communities.

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INTRODUCTION

Housing Solutions: A place for everyone – Phase 2 Plan, 2019 to 2023 (Housing Solutions Phase 2) was approved by Regional Council in October 2019. The Phase 2 plan set out three goals and long-term objectives to address housing needs in York Region. This report provides an update on progress made toward those goals and objectives in 2019 and 2020.



Our goals

1



**Increase the supply of
affordable and rental
housing**

2



**Help people find
and keep housing**

3



**Strengthen the housing
and homelessness
system**

HIGHLIGHTS

Progress toward the *Housing Solutions Phase 2* goals in 2019 and 2020 includes:

Goal 1: Increase the Supply of Affordable and Rental Housing

- Completed background work to update housing-related policies in the Regional Official Plan
- Approved (through Council) a servicing reserve and development charge deferral policy to encourage affordable purpose-built rental housing construction
- Built 194 new community housing units in the City of Vaughan and City of Markham

Goal 2: Help People Find and Keep Housing

- Launched new programs and enhanced existing ones to support people experiencing—or who are at risk of—homelessness, including a Diversion Program to support individuals seeking emergency housing to secure alternative temporary or permanent housing
- Provided a portable housing benefit to 258 households
- Completed a wait-list review to better understand the needs of people on the wait list and inform future program and policy development

Goal 3: Strengthen the Housing and Homelessness System

- Working with other Service Managers, advocated for province-wide policy changes to ensure sustainability of the community housing sector as mortgages and operating agreements end; Regional Council endorsed the recommendations and if supported by the province, the changes will result in approximately \$1 billion over 40 years to sustain the existing supply of community housing and invest in new affordable housing and homelessness initiatives in York Region
- Partnered with United Way Greater Toronto on the Built for Zero initiative to end chronic homelessness and worked to strengthen interagency coordination to help prioritize and refer individuals and families experiencing homelessness for appropriate housing options
- Completed a forecast of long-term care and other seniors' housing implications in York Region to inform advocacy and planning to enable more seniors to age in place for longer
- Added all York Region programs and services, including housing and homelessness supports, to Ontario's *Call 2-1-1* inventory to improve system navigation
- The Region signed a partnership agreement with all three Ontario Health Teams located in York Region, providing an opportunity to influence and advocate for housing supports for residents

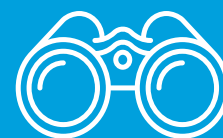
Kingbridge Conference Centre, located in King Township, served as a temporary transitional shelter during COVID-19



HELPING PEOPLE FIND AND KEEP HOUSING THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a series of challenges to keeping people safe and healthy, especially those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, those living in congregate settings and those who lost income. The Region responded rapidly to these emerging needs by adapting existing programs, creating new supports and strengthening and expanding existing partnerships with service providers and agencies, community housing providers and provincial ministries to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and continue to help residents find and keep housing. Key actions included:

- Opened a temporary transitional shelter to support individuals seeking emergency housing during the pandemic through a central intake line and a focus on rapid re-housing and family reunification. This facility provided individuals a safe place to self-isolate for 14 days to help them safely move into temporary or permanent housing. The temporary transitional shelter also provided case management, individualized housing plan supports and access to wrap-around supports. This facility helped eliminate the potential spread of COVID-19 in emergency housing facilities. In 2020, 552 clients were served through the transitional shelter, of those, 198 clients were supported to find permanent housing.
- Created a temporary self-isolation shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness who are positive or awaiting test results for COVID-19 to safely quarantine while providing nursing supports for mild symptoms. In 2020, the site helped York Region hospitals support 43 individuals and helped limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Established the Congregate Living Table to coordinate with provincial ministries, service providers and internal partners to support vulnerable residents living in group settings. This resulted in, among other things, proactive and speedy COVID-19 testing of residents and staff.
- Through a partnership with the United Way Greater Toronto, created the COVID-19 Community Coordination (3C) initiative to work with agencies to identify and respond to community needs and gaps, including homelessness and food insecurity, emerging collaborative and funding opportunities. A Homelessness Response Table was formed to support a collaborative response to supporting unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness during the pandemic and an Emergency Food Access Table helped agencies and food banks deliver meals and grocery cards to vulnerable populations. The 3C initiative also supported delivery of masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help people remain at home.



LOOKING AHEAD

Over the past two years, York Region worked with community-based organizations, housing providers and developers, local municipalities and the federal and provincial governments to address residents' housing needs. The Region responded with flexibility and speed to mitigate the impacts of a global pandemic on housing while continuing to deliver core housing programs and meet 2019 and 2020 commitments. In 2021, a new work plan will be established to provide updated direction for the Region to continue to work toward the goals of *Housing Solutions Phase 2*.

- Expanded emergency housing capacity through the extension of York Region's two Seasonal Shelters, regularly scheduled to close end of March 2020 to the end of May 2020. Individuals staying at the seasonal shelters were moved to the transitional shelter upon its opening in May 2020.
- Provided resources and guidance to help Housing with Supports operators prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support residents, including activity sheets to encourage residents to safely self-isolate and increased Quality of Life funding to help residents shelter in place. Also established regular meetings with operators and York Region Public Health to address questions, concerns, provide timely updates and ongoing support.
- Launched a COVID-19 In-Situ Program to provide a short-term rent benefit to lower-income community housing residents paying market rent who experienced significant decreases in income due to the pandemic. In 2020, 18 households were approved for the benefit to help avoid housing instability or loss.
- Through partnerships, delivered virtual financial literacy, counselling, children's and cultural programming to community housing residents and supported residents to shelter in place through wellness checks, food security and a seniors' technology initiative that provided seniors with tablets, enabling them to stay connected with friends and family and access virtual supports.
- Provided additional funding to the Homelessness Prevention Program and Housing Stability Program to help people stay housed.
- Supported clients to access all possible income resources and avoid potential housing loss.

The COVID-19 pandemic identified new long-term opportunities to address housing needs in York Region. The Region was well-positioned to respond to these opportunities through the *Portfolio Management Plan* for Housing York Inc. (HYI) and a long-term capital plan.

- The provincial Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 capital component will support approximately 24 new transitional prefabricated housing units in York Region.
- The federal government established a new Rapid Housing Initiative and York Region applied for funding to build up to 113 new units on existing community housing and Regional properties. Although York Region was not selected for program funding due to the program being oversubscribed, it may be considered for future program expansion. In the 2021 budget, the federal government has committed to invest an additional \$1.5 billion under this program in 2021 and 2022.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	2019	2020
Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing	Percentage of new housing built in centres and corridors*	39% (1825 units)	30% (1740 units)
	New housing built by structure type across the Region year-over-year	4,692 units, 2,195 units in condo and apartment buildings	5831 units, 2,258 units in condo and apartment buildings
	Number of new private purpose-built rental housing units created year-over-year	0	36
	Number of private purpose-built rental units that have received Regional financial incentives	0	261
	Number of new community housing units created (year-over-year)	162	32
*The percentage of new housing built in centres and corridors varies as other areas with growth potential receive comprehensive planning approvals.			
Help people find and keep housing	Number/percentage of clients on the subsidized housing wait list receiving support to improve housing affordability	This measure relies on a technology solution that is set to launch in 2021	
	Number of clients who received support to improve housing stability, year-over-year	5,107	5,157
	Number of people at risk of homelessness who remained housed for at least six months**	1,740	1,429
	Number of people who moved from emergency housing to long-term housing***	446	280
	Number of people who were diverted from emergency housing	92	129
	Number and percentage of people experiencing chronic homelessness who remained housed for at least six months****	63 (61%)	82 (78%)
<p>**In 2020, there was a temporary decrease in the number of people who accessed services such as the Housing Stability Program due to the pandemic. The percentage of people who remained housed after six months remained comparable, at 83% in 2019 and 81% in 2020.</p> <p>***The percentage of people who moved from emergency housing to longer-term housing was approximately 40% in 2019 and 2020. In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals experiencing homelessness were supported to find or keep housing through the Diversion Program and/or transitional shelter. To align with infection prevention and control measures, the transitional shelter was established in May 2020 as the entry point to access emergency or longer-term housing across the Region. The provincial eviction moratorium may also have had an impact.</p> <p>****Number of Home Now program clients remaining housed at six months.</p>			

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	2019	2020
Strengthen the housing and homelessness system	Number of training/capacity building activities delivered for housing providers	6	6
	Number of community housing units that received capital funding to maintain a state of good repair, year-over-year	1,246	1,923
	Number of affordable rental units administered by York Region*****	6,940	6,841
	Number of rent-geared-to-income units in York Region	4,129	4,087
	Number of people referred to Community Collaborative Table	105	N/A
	Number of people experiencing homelessness at a point-in-time*****		
	Number/percentage of department programs and services included in the inventory (programs that meet Ontario's <i>Call 2-1-1</i> Inclusion policy criteria)	100% of CHS	100%
	Percentage of Community Investment Fund organizations included in the inventory	42 programs (98%)	42 programs (100%)
	Increase number of advocacy activities related to long-term care beds	13	6
<p>*****Two former federal housing providers that reached the end of their operating agreements left the community housing system, resulting in a loss of 131 units. Because 32 new units were completed, the net decrease to the number of affordable rental units administered by the Region was 99.</p> <p>*****The last point-in-time count was in 2018 and a count did not take place in 2019 or 2020. In March 2021, following a pause on enumeration, the province informed Service Managers that they would be required to conduct a point-in-time count in 2021 and develop and implement a By-Name List by January 1, 2022. York Region established a By-Name List following the 2018 homelessness enumeration. The 2021 point-in-time count will inform the refresh of the By-Name List to be aligned with the direction from the province and will use it to report on this performance measure in the future.</p>			

2019 ACTION PLAN UPDATES

Goal

1 Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing



OBJECTIVES	2019 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Plan for a full mix and range of housing options to support achievement of complete communities and promote economic development	1.1 Complete an update of <i>Housing Matters</i> , a technical document that supports the housing market needs assessment for York Region	Completed the <i>Housing Matters</i> 2019 update.
2. Implement tools and policies to increase the affordable housing supply	2.1 Complete a study of a mixed tenure development model, combining ownership and rental units, to increase the supply of affordable housing options	The study was completed in 2019. At this time, no further action is planned as the study found that the model is not self-sustaining.
	2.2 Complete the purpose-built rental housing incentives package	York Region Council approved new development charge deferrals for affordable, purpose-built rental buildings in October of 2019. Council approved a Regional-servicing allocation reserve to support purpose-built rental housing initiatives , subject to area constraints.
3. Build community housing and encourage affordable rental housing to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income households	3.1 Complete a portfolio management strategy for HYI that identifies opportunities for existing properties (retain, redevelop, divest) aiming to leverage the value of land, review opportunities for future development and inform potential new capital funding strategies	The portfolio management strategy was completed and reported to the HYI Board in 2019. The strategy is not publicly available because identification of potential development opportunities could impact the outcome.
	3.2 Complete construction of 162 HYI units for families, singles and seniors in the City of Vaughan and begin rent-up	Construction of Woodbridge Lane in the City of Vaughan was substantially completed.

Goal

2 Help people find and keep housing



OBJECTIVES	2019 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Deliver programs that help residents with low and moderate income living in private market housing keep their homes	1.1 Pilot a local portable rent subsidy to help residents find and keep affordable housing	Developed and launched a York Region Portable Housing Benefit pilot, providing an additional option for households on the subsidized housing wait list. The Portable Housing Benefit helps recipients afford market rent units in York Region, increasing flexibility to find housing that best meets their needs.
2. Support long-term housing stability by strengthening individuals and communities	2.1 Deliver programs and services to community housing residents that increase resilience and support community-building	Working with a range of partner agencies, delivered programs including: financial literacy and income tax supports, seniors' and children's programming, food security assistance, English as Second Language classes and social work.
	2.2 Complete a comprehensive review of subsidized housing applicants on the Region's wait list to identify policies and practices to better connect people with alternatives to a subsidized housing unit	Completed a Comprehensive Review of the Subsidized Housing Wait List , with recommendations including better assessing applicants' needs, improving communication and supporting applicants while they wait for housing. The findings of the review will inform ongoing policy and process changes to the subsidized housing wait list, including implementing an online portal to improve communication in 2020.
3. Advance prevention programs through continuous improvements to help people at risk of homelessness remain stably housed	3.1 Plan to integrate existing housing stability resources, including the Homelessness Prevention Program, into a streamlined approach that more effectively support people experiencing and at risk of homelessness	Access York continued to coordinate program intake to streamline access to the right supports for individuals and families.
4. Strengthen homelessness and housing stability services to help people experiencing homelessness to find and keep housing	4.1 Implement a program to help people seeking shelter find safe accommodation and/or stabilize their housing without having to use emergency housing or seasonal shelter	A Diversion Program was successfully piloted and implemented, serving 92 clients at Porter Place and Belinda's Place to support re-housing and avert admission to an emergency housing facility by facilitating access to more cost-effective housing-related services.

Goal

3 Strengthen the housing and homelessness system



OBJECTIVES	2019 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Sustain the existing stock of community housing	<p>1.1 Advocate to the provincial government for legislative and regulatory changes to sustain, modernize and enhance Ontario's community housing system</p> <p>1.2 Deliver training to community housing providers on end of operating agreements and end of mortgages</p> <p>1.3 Work with Service Managers across the province to develop a coordinated response to the end of mortgage issue for community housing providers mandated under the <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i></p>	<p>Submitted recommendations to the province regarding proposed regulatory changes regarding wait list administration and calculation of rent-geared-to-income.</p> <p>Offered training to housing provider boards of directors on the impact of end of mortgages and operating agreements in June 2019, resulting in better understanding of their program obligations.</p> <p>Analyzed impacts of the legislated funding formula for Service Managers and community housing providers whose mortgages are ending, to inform ongoing advocacy to the province to ensure mortgage savings remain in the community housing system.</p>
2. Build an integrated system to plan and deliver homelessness and housing stability services	<p>2.1 Work with United Way Greater Toronto in its role as the community entity for federal homelessness funding and with community partners to jointly develop a plan for a coordinated access system that will provide a process for intake, assessment and referral to be used by all partners</p> <p>2.2 Work with community partners to strengthen the By-Name List to prioritize and match individuals and families experiencing homelessness to appropriate services and supports (2019/2020)</p>	<p>Participated in work led by United Way Greater Toronto to map homelessness services in York Region to identify system pressures and emerging practices to inform policies for a coordinated access system to strengthen housing stability and homelessness services.</p> <p>Increased the number of community agencies and programs contributing to the By-Name List, which strengthened interagency coordination and improved the process for prioritization and referral to appropriate housing options for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In 2019, 67 out of 104 individuals on the By-Name List, that were prioritized and referred to housing options such as the Home Now program, were housed.</p>
3. Conduct research, engagement and knowledge sharing to identify service system gaps and build community capacity in the homelessness and housing stability service system	<p>3.1 Participate in development of a community-led youth homelessness prevention and housing stabilization strategy</p> <p>3.2 Engage people with lived experience of homelessness to inform service system planning</p> <p>3.3 Explore options for programs that support tenants and landlords in York Region</p>	<p>York Region is working with 360°Kids, who is leading the development of a community led youth homelessness prevention and stabilization strategy, to reduce and prevent youth homelessness. A steering committee was established including multiple partners serving youth in York Region.</p> <p>Formed a lived experience advisory group to provide guidance to inform the development of system-level policies, standards of care and initiatives aimed at addressing homelessness.</p> <p>Partnered with the Community Legal Clinic to support case management and advocacy for individuals at risk of homelessness to maintain their housing.</p>
4. Encourage and facilitate expansion of long-term care to help residents age in their communities	No 2019 action under this objective	N/A

2020 ACTION PLAN UPDATES

Goal

1 Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing



OBJECTIVES	2020 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Plan for a full mix and range of housing options to support achievement of complete communities and promote economic development	1.1 Enhance Official Plan policies to direct substantial new growth in housing to areas well-served by transit and services	Background work to support Regional Official Plan policy updates to direct substantial new growth in housing to areas well-served by transit and services was advanced, including through research, consultation, analysis and Council communications.
2. Implement tools and policies to increase the affordable housing supply	2.1 Research programs to support affordable homeownership and identify potential partnership and pilot opportunities	Researched and explored options for the Region to support affordable home ownership and recommend the focus remain on increasing the supply of rental housing at this time, given the Region's extremely low vacancy rates and growing need for affordable rental options, as well as the high cost relative to the impact of affordable home ownership programs.
3. Build community housing and encourage affordable rental housing to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income households	3.1 Provide resources and information to support community housing providers seeking to develop new housing	Connected three housing providers with resources to explore development opportunities.
	3.2 Continue construction of 265 new HYI units for seniors in the City of Markham (approved by York Regional Council in September 2015)	Construction of the Unionville affordable seniors housing development began in 2020. Initial occupancy is expected in late 2022, with full occupancy in 2023.
	3.3 Begin construction of approximately 100 new HYI units in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (land acquisition approved by York Regional Council in June 2018)	The planning application was in progress in 2020; final approval was delayed and is expected in 2021.
	3.4 Continue support for and allocation of federal-provincial funding to develop 32 new community housing units for seniors in the City of Markham (approved by York Regional Council in September 2016)	The new building, Larry Todd Place, was completed, adding 32 affordable rental housing units, including 15 subsidized units.
	3.5 Explore opportunities for HYI portfolio growth in partnership with senior levels of government, local cities and towns, school boards, the private sector and others	Engaged in discussions with potential partners including the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and local municipalities to explore opportunities. Discussions with these partners and others continue.
	3.6 [NEW] Respond to new opportunities for federal and provincial funding to support affordable housing construction	Applied for \$34 million in funding under the Rapid Housing Initiative. Confirmed a funding allocation of \$7.3 million under the Social Services Relief Fund which will be used to add approximately 24 prefabricated transitional housing units in 2021.

Goal

2 Help people find and keep housing



OBJECTIVES	2020 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Deliver programs that help residents with low and moderate income living in private market housing keep their homes	<p>1.1 Review the local portable rent subsidy pilot</p> <p>1.2 [NEW] Launch the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit and house up to 260 households by December 31, 2020</p>	<p>The York Region Portable Housing Benefit was fully taken up by late 2020, with 29 households approved for a benefit to help them afford market rental housing in York Region. The program review will be completed following a provincial review of related regulations to determine future direction.</p> <p>York Region received a planning allocation of \$1.8 million for 2020/2021 to implement this program, which is delivered by the province. 237 households received the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.</p>
2. Support long-term housing stability by strengthening individuals and communities	2.1 Develop policies and practices to respond to findings in the comprehensive wait list review that will better connect people with supports to help them find or keep appropriate homes	Implemented an online application portal, to improve communication and enable applicants to manage their own applications.
3. Advance prevention programs through continuous improvements to help people at risk of homelessness remain stably housed	3.1 Help more people at risk of homelessness due to financial hardship become self-sustainable by providing temporary financial support and case management through the Short Term Assistance for Renters (STAR) program	Implemented new STAR program data tracking and collection system, to better analyze trends about program needs and resources accessed by clients. This information informs program and system planning as well as resource allocation.
4. Strengthen homelessness and housing stability services to help people experiencing homelessness to find and keep housing	<p>4.1 Plan for the transformation of the Housing with Supports program (formerly called the domiciliary hostels program) into a service delivery model that aligns with the broader homelessness support system</p> <p>4.2 Create a service delivery model for the planned new men's emergency housing facility</p>	<p>Implemented the Housing with Supports database in fall 2020. A comprehensive review of the Housing with Supports program was completed in 2019. Further work on this was paused due to COVID-19. Recommendations will be reviewed and an implementation plan developed in 2021/2022.</p> <p>In the process of creating a delivery model to inform the development of a new men's emergency housing facility. This work was paused due to COVID-19.</p>

Goal

3 Strengthen the housing and homelessness system



OBJECTIVES	2020 ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Sustain the existing stock of community housing	1.1 Use the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative to support community housing providers in maintaining their units in a good state of repair	Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative funds supported 12 housing providers with 1,272 units to maintain their units in a state of good repair.
	1.2 Develop options to sustain existing rent subsidy programs after provincial funding arrangements end	Identified options to mitigate the impact of the end of the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program in 2023 for current households, should the province choose not to continue to fund it. The program supports approximately 350 households.
	1.3 [NEW] Continue to work with Service Managers and the province to advocate for savings resulting from the end of housing provider mortgages to be retained in the community housing system to support both capital repairs in existing buildings and new development	York Region led a task force of Service Managers across Ontario to develop recommendations to the province to allow Service Managers to retain mortgage savings as funders of the system, to be reinvested in local housing and homelessness systems based on local needs. The resulting position paper was endorsed by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association and Regional Council . Subject to provincial approval, the Region's recommendations could result in \$1B for housing and homelessness over 40 years.
	1.4 [NEW] Initiated the Housing Provider Technology Grant to provide up to 44 grants of \$5,000 to help non-profit and community housing providers purchase technology to access the subsidized housing wait list, improve their business processes and adapt to overcome technical challenges posed by COVID-19	In 2020, 36 housing providers received grants to purchase technology to support their operations, enable them to serve residents more efficiently and facilitate virtual governance processes for their Boards.
2. Build an integrated system to plan and deliver homelessness and housing stability services	2.1 Begin implementation of the coordinated access system by creating a "Main Access Point" for programs delivered or overseen by York Region. This will enable clients to access programs from one point of contact. Future phases will expand to include community partners as we work towards a systems approach	In 2020, the Diversion Program was rolled out to all emergency housing facilities. Due to COVID-19, the implementation of the full coordinated access system has been pushed to 2022. In 2020, the Main Access Point was piloted through the transitional shelter intake line.
	2.2 Support a homeless enumeration led by United Way Greater Toronto, to better understand the scope of homelessness in the community and the needs and barriers of people experiencing homelessness	Due to COVID-19, the federal government's point-in-time homelessness count was postponed to spring 2021. The Region will continue to be a key partner in the delivery of this enumeration and its analysis.

OBJECTIVES	2020 ACTION	OUTCOME
	2.3 [NEW] Continue to support development and implementation of a community-led youth homelessness prevention and housing stabilization strategy	York Region and 360°Kids developed a community-led youth homelessness prevention and stabilization strategy, to reduce and prevent the occurrence of youth homelessness. York Region has representation on the Youth Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization Strategy Steering Committee.
3. Conduct research, engagement and knowledge sharing to identify service system gaps and build community capacity in the homelessness and housing stability service system	3.1 Develop an inventory of housing and homelessness supports in York Region, for residents and case workers, to improve system navigation	All York Region programs and services including housing and homelessness supports were added to the 211 inventory to support service navigation and referrals. Building on this, an agreement between the Region and Ample Labs is in place for one year (with possibility for extension) to fund Chalmers, a web-based artificial intelligence tool to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to navigate and connect to social services like shelters, free meals, clothing banks and more.
	3.2 Participate in OHT collaborations and networks to influence policy, program design and funding and to advocate for the housing needs of York Region residents when they leave care	The Region is a signed partner with all three Ontario Health Teams located in York Region. The pandemic paused many OHT actions, however ongoing collaboration included circulating the Council-endorsed <i>Forecast for Long-Term Care Beds and Implications for Seniors' Housing Needs</i> to support ongoing outreach and advocacy.
	3.3 [NEW] Participate in a provincial consultation on options to strengthen the supportive housing system	Through <i>York Region's response to provincial consultations on supportive housing</i> , Regional Council endorsed recommendations for the province including strengthening and clarifying existing roles in the supportive housing system to reduce fragmentation, establishing a lead ministry to oversee supportive housing and committing to dedicated funding for rent subsidies and to maintaining new and existing rent supplement programs.
4. Encourage and facilitate expansion of long-term care to help residents age in their communities	4.1 Advocate to improve policy planning and decision-making for long-term care beds by developing a forecast for York Region, including the required number, type and location	<i>Regional Council</i> endorsed the report <i>Forecast for Long-Term Care Beds and Implications for Seniors' Housing Needs</i> and circulated it to local municipalities, the Local Health Integration Network, York Region Ontario Health Teams, AdvantAge Ontario, Human Services Planning Board and other organizations. This work will support advocacy to increase the supply of long-term care beds in York Region, diversify the housing stock and address support services that enable seniors to age in place for longer. To date, the province has announced that a total of 1,276 new long-term care beds will be allocated to York Region as part of its program to add 30,000 new beds in Ontario over the next 10 years.
	4.2 Complete a study of the potential future use of the Newmarket Health Centre Site, such as for a seniors' campus of care and other seniors' housing options	Completed a needs and capacity assessment study to inform ongoing/future work. Received Council approval to proceed with next stage of project planning.

WHERE THE HOUSING SYSTEM STOOD IN 2020

SYSTEM INDICATORS

MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

3% is considered to be a healthy vacancy rate. In 2020, the maximum affordable rent for a household at the sixth income decile for renter households in York Region was \$1,576.

VACANCY RATE

	2019	2020
Purpose-built	1.2%	1.9%
Rental condo	0.3%	0.9%

CMHC Rental Market Survey Data Tables, 2019 and 2020, Table 1.1.1 and Table 4.1.1



AVERAGE RENT

	2019		2020	
	\$1,368	up 8% over 2018	\$1,465	up 15.6% over 2018
	\$2,071	up 3.5% over 2018	\$2,200	up 9.9% over 2018

CMHC Rental Market Survey Data Tables, 2018, 2019 and 2020, Table 1.1.2 and Table 4.1.3

OWNERSHIP HOUSING

Affordable housing thresholds identify the highest price a household earning at the sixth decile of the income distribution can afford. In York Region, the threshold was \$503,145 in 2020, and the maximum affordable monthly carrying cost for a home purchased in 2020 was \$3,149.



	2019	2020
Average price new single-detached home	\$1.39 million	\$1.36 million
Average resale price for all housing types	\$937,546	\$1,067,134
Estimated monthly carrying cost for a resale townhouse (includes mortgage, mortgage insurance and property taxes)	\$4,725	\$5,125

Adapted from CMHC Market Absorption Survey, 2019 and 2020, for Local Municipalities in York Region

Adapted from Toronto Real Estate Board Market Watch Reports, 2019 and 2020

Adapted from Toronto Real Estate Board Market Watch Reports, 2019 and 2020, and York Region Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring model, 2019 and 2020

5%

The percent of new ownership housing that is affordable to households at the sixth income decile (\$125,967 in 2020).

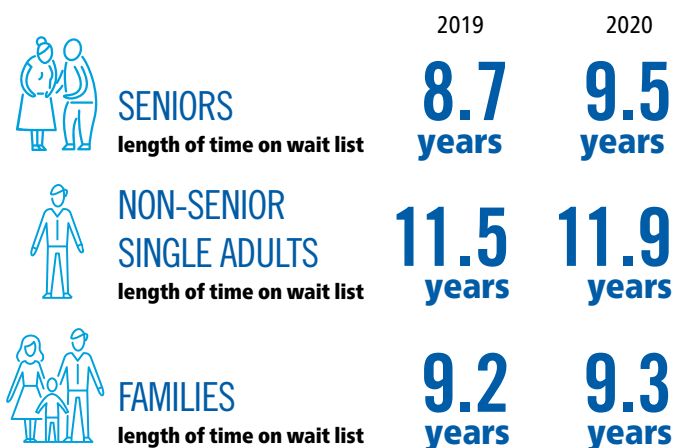
In 2019, 11% of new ownership housing was affordable to households at the sixth income decile.

York Region Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring Reports, 2019 and 2020

COMMUNITY HOUSING

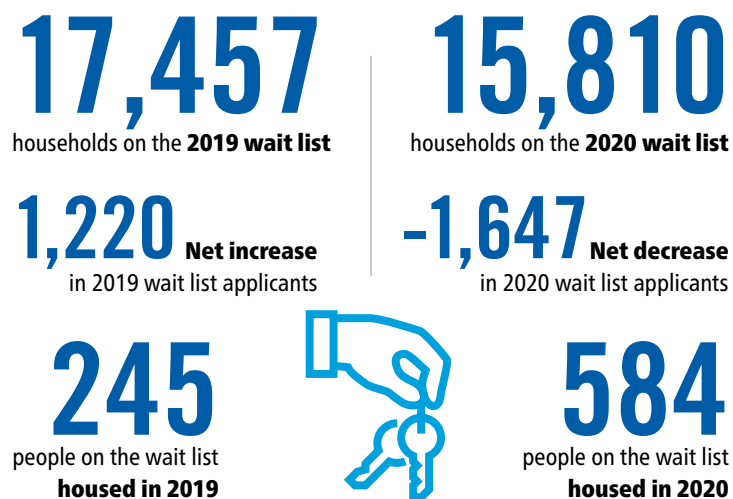
In 2019, MBNCanada reported that the median percentage of subsidized housing wait list applicants offered housing among participating Ontario Service Managers was 7.9%; in 2019 York Region housed 1.4% of the wait list and 3.7% in 2020.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WAIT TIMES



*Excludes applicants with Special Priority status. "Families" includes households with two or more people.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WAIT LIST

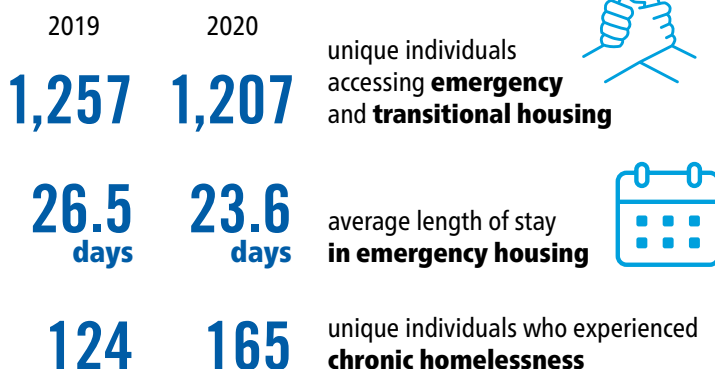


The decrease in the number of households on the wait list in 2020 reflects the one-time impact of cancelling the applications of 2,428 households that exceeded the Region's income and asset limits and a decrease in the number of new applicants, as well as an increase in the number of households that were housed.

York Region
Subsidized
Housing Wait
List data

HOMELESSNESS

In 2019, MBNCanada reported that the median for average length of stay in emergency shelters across participating Ontario Service Managers was 13.3 days.



York Region, Community and Health Services Department

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION



LONG-TERM CARE

The number of individuals waiting per bed increased from 8.42 (2019) to 9.11 (2020), calculated using 192 beds (the total number of basic and private beds for Maple Health Centre and Newmarket Health Centre).



York Region, Community and Health Services Department

ANALYSIS

PRIVATE MARKET RENTAL AND OWNERSHIP HOUSING

Housing affordability and a tight private rental market are ongoing challenges. Vacancy rates increased in 2020, but for most unit sizes remained below the 3% benchmark considered to indicate a 'healthy' rental market. The percentage of new ownership housing that is affordable to households at the sixth income decile (\$125,967 in 2020) or below fell from 11% in 2019 to 5% in 2020. The lack of affordable housing options affects the long-term growth and sustainability of our communities. [Increasing housing costs](#) have been a factor in fewer people moving into York Region and existing residents moving out, particularly younger people.

COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HOUSING SUBSIDIES

The Region provided housing assistance to 584 households on the subsidized housing wait list, a significant increase from 2019 when only 245 households were housed. Much of the increase was due to the implementation of new portable housing benefits (237 households received the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit and 21 households received the York Region Portable Housing Benefit) and the rent-up of two new community housing buildings (90 households from the subsidized housing wait list). Without ongoing and increased investment in both portable benefits and new affordable housing supply, the increase in the number of applicants housed may not be sustainable in future years.

The size of the subsidized housing wait list decreased between 2019 and 2020, for the first time since 2008, but a significant portion of the decrease reflects the one-time impact of removing existing applicants who were no longer eligible under York Region's income and asset limits. Although the number of new applications for assistance declined in 2020, it outpaced the number of households that were housed and it may increase again in the future. The Region will continue to monitor these trends.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING STABILITY SERVICES

The number of unique individuals who accessed emergency housing and the average stay in emergency housing decreased with 1,095 unique clients served with an average stay of 25 days in 2019 to 700 unique clients served with an average stay of 38 days in 2020, excluding clients who stayed in the temporary transitional shelter. COVID-19 protocols, including reduced capacity and closure of drop-in programs, may have had an impact. Establishing the transitional shelter with wrap-around support services for people to self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and implementation of the Diversion Program, may also have contributed to lower emergency housing use.

The Housing Stability Program and the Homelessness Prevention Program help eligible residents with rent and utility arrears. Both programs experienced a decrease in use in 2020 due to a five-month residential eviction moratorium from March to July because of COVID-19 and a gradual reopening of the Landlord and Tenant Board. Federal income support programs such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit also helped residents maintain their housing. The Region continues to monitor the Housing Stability Program and Homelessness Prevention Program resource needs to reduce the risk of homelessness and has allocated additional funding under the Social Services Relief Fund in the event of increased need when federal supports are discontinued.

The Outreach Program provides in person and virtual wraparound support such as community referrals, crisis intervention and housing stability support to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find and keep housing. The Outreach Program supported more clients compared to previous years, as a result of a new centralized intake line for emergency housing. Outreach workers connected with individuals through this line to provide immediate and ongoing support. The Outreach Program also established a proactive encampment response to locate and support individuals who were living unsheltered.

LONG-TERM CARE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SENIORS' HOUSING AND OTHER AGING IN PLACE SUPPORTS

The number of individuals waiting for a long-term care bed in one of York Region's municipal homes is continuing to grow. The [*Forecast for Long-Term Care Beds and Implications for Seniors' Housing Needs*](#) identified that seniors needs cannot be met by long-term care alone and the Region needs a greater diversity of housing types as well as support services that can help more people age in place for longer.

Unionville seniors affordable housing development groundbreaking, City of Markham



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