



At Home in Durham

2016 Annual Report



2016 Annual Report: At Home in Durham

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

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



End Homelessness in Durham



Affordable Rent for Everyone



Greater Housing Choice



Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods



At Home in Durham sets out a number of anticipated outcomes and key actions to support the realization of each of these goals. We are starting to see some progress. Homelessness is on the decline, and there is increased financial housing assistance and co-ordination of supports for people struggling to access and maintain suitable and affordable housing.

This is the second annual report of *At Home in Durham*. It highlights significant activities over the past year and provides a qualitative measure of the progress to date with respect to the anticipated outcomes that will contribute to the success of the plan.

Anticipated Outcomes



Early Progress

Early discussions about potential strategies or initiatives that may have an impact.



Limited Progress

Strategies in place or limited actions/initiatives that may have an impact.



Some Progress

Actions/initiatives underway that have had some impact that is not yet sustained.



Good Progress

Actions/initiatives underway that are having a sustained impact.



Goal 1 Progress: End Homelessness

At Home in Durham commits to the development of long-term innovative approaches to improve the ability of households to access and retain housing. In Durham, people who are homeless are generally accommodated in emergency shelters, or they may be provisionally housed, meaning that their accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure (e.g. staying with family or friends). Many low-income renters in Durham are also at risk of homelessness.

The Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH) supports strategic decision-making regarding homelessness resources funded by the Region of Durham to ensure co-ordination of services across the network of community agencies that provide them. Funding has shifted towards homelessness prevention, emphasizing supports that will allow people to remain in their homes whenever possible.

Progress is being made to end homelessness in Durham. Shelter use is down, and there is an increased co-ordination of supports, making it easier for people to access and maintain suitable and affordable housing.

Anticipated Outcomes



Good Progress

Easier and more co-ordinated access to programs and support services to maintain housing.



Some Progress

Increased support and quicker access to affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.



Early Progress

Improved information about, and access to, the supportive and supported housing system in the region.

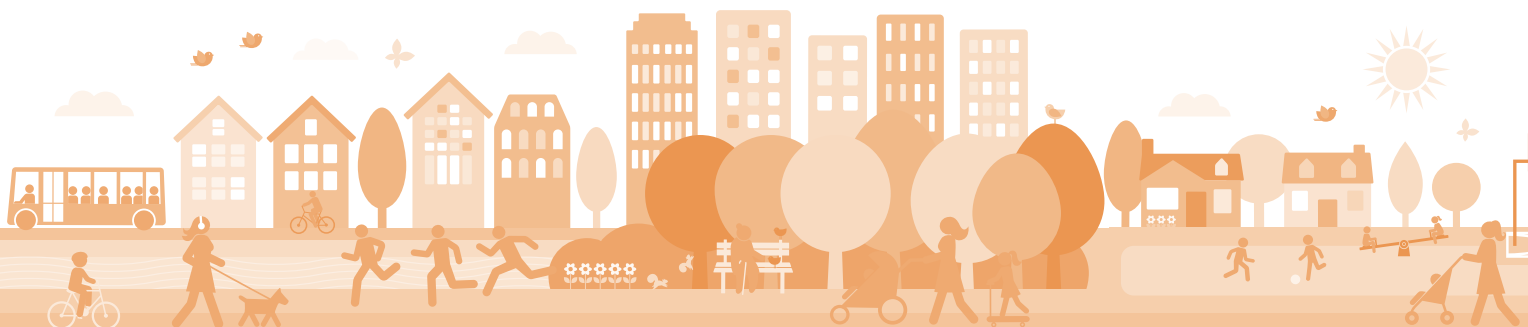


0%
chronically
homeless¹
people
identified



5,700
on **RGI**
waiting list

<1/2 may be
provisionally
accommodated

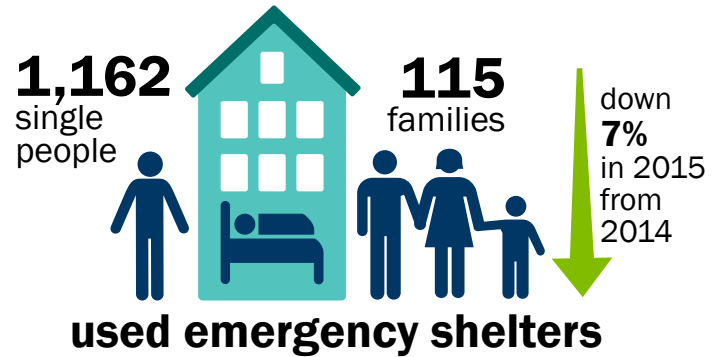
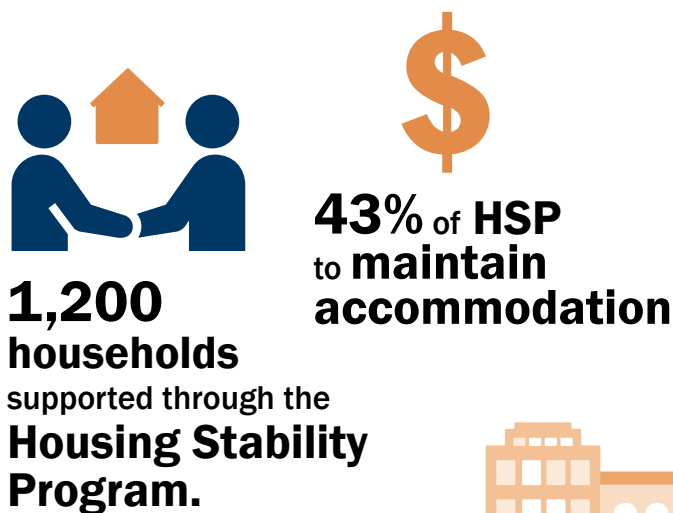


in Durham



Homelessness Prevention

\$5.4 million in provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding was provided to multiple community service agencies throughout Durham to provide emergency shelter services, housing outreach, housing with related supports, and homelessness prevention through the Housing Stability Program. In 2015, two new programs were funded – one to support eviction prevention by providing supports to people with hoarding behaviours through VHA Home Health Care, and another that provides housing with related supports to persons with developmental disabilities through Community Living Durham North. In addition, there is increased financial assistance for homelessness programs, including an increased contribution of almost \$400,000 in the 2016 Region of Durham Business Plan and Budget.



Landlord and Tenant Forums

The Housing Services Division hosted forums on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities in the seven Priority Health Neighbourhoods identified by the Durham Health Department in its Health Neighbourhoods Report. Access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is an indicator of positive health outcomes. However, poor landlord-tenant relationships can lead to eviction and possible homelessness. The forums provided information and discussion about the Residential Tenancies Act, housing and human rights, Environmental Health and local municipal by-laws. The forums were well received by both landlords and tenants.



Goal 2 Progress: Affordable Rent

At Home in Durham recognizes that affordable housing is vital to strong and vibrant communities, and commits to working in partnership with the non-profit and private housing sectors to increase affordable housing options for low and moderate income households. It also recognizes the need for increased rental assistance for low-income households who struggle with more severe affordability needs.

People with low to moderate income face increasing challenges in finding affordable rental housing in Durham. Although the Region's social housing portfolio ensures a level of affordability for some of the most vulnerable people in our community – including seniors, people with disabilities and families in crisis – only about 300 subsidized units become available annually. In order to address the affordability needs of all renters in Durham with low to moderate income, the community needs a greater range of affordable rental housing options.

Although progress is being made to increase the provision of rental assistance for low income households, much of this assistance is temporary in nature, and affordable rental housing options remain limited for low to moderate income households.

Anticipated Outcomes



Early Progress

More affordable rental housing options in the private market for low and moderate income households.



Some Progress

An increased supply of government-assisted rental housing options.



Some Progress

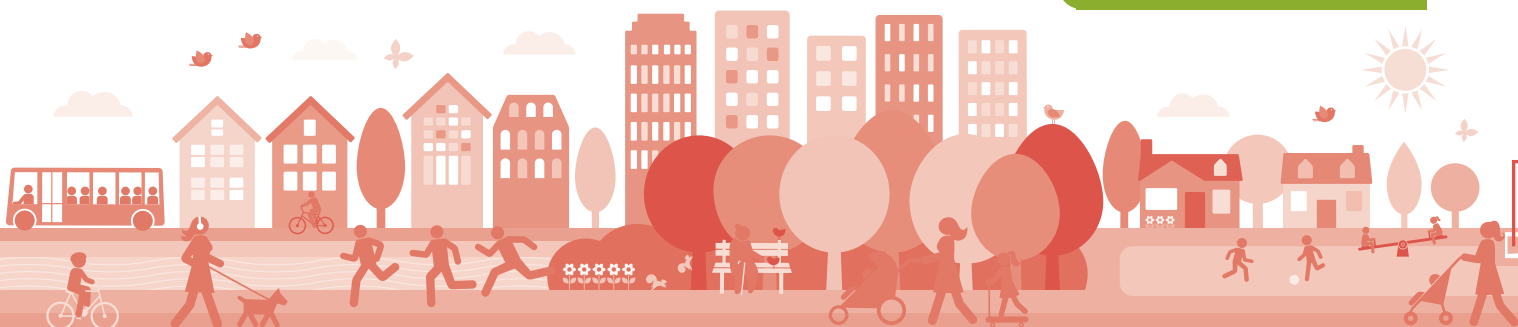
Increased rental assistance for low-income households.

\$1,021 average market rent

\$40,840 required to pay 30% of income on rent

1 in 5 households in Durham earn less than \$40,840

Rental housing starts in Durham
increased from
110 units in **2014**
to **605** units in **2015**



for Everyone



Social Housing Investments

The Region contributes over \$32 million annually in Regional funding to support the operations of 45 non-profit housing providers across the region, and to provide long-term rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) subsidy for 4,481 households.

Affordable Housing Investments

The Region allocated \$13.8 million in Canada-Ontario Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) – 2014 Extension funding over four years for capital projects to stimulate the development of affordable rental units in Durham, creating approximately 122 new affordable rental units. This will increase the supply from the existing 378 units to approximately 500 units. In order to ensure affordable rents beyond the program's minimum twenty-year affordability period, the Region is soliciting proposals for not-for profit developments, deferring development charges and setting municipal property taxes equivalent to the single residential rate for twenty years."

2 in 5 renters in Priority neighbourhoods pay > 30% of income on rent

3 in 10 renters are in core housing need²



Increase affordable rental housing
units from **378 to 500**
over four years

444 households in 2015 received the Durham Housing Benefit up from **363 households in 2014**

166 households received a new portable Housing Allowance

Rental Housing Assistance

The Durham Housing Benefit (DHB) and Housing Allowance programs have improved affordability and stabilized housing for many households on the Region's social housing wait list. The Housing Allowance provides a temporary portable monthly allowance of up to \$300 payable through the Ministry of Finance for up to 60 months. The DHB program provides temporary assistance to offset actual market rent charges by \$200 to \$500 per month. A number of DHB tenants also receive community supports to maintain housing, resulting in improved health and social outcomes.







Goal 3 Progress: Greater Housing

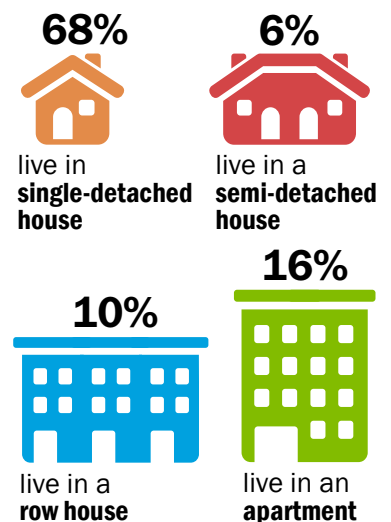
Strong, vibrant communities offer diverse people a range of housing options that reflect their changing needs and financial circumstances. *At Home in Durham* commits to creating greater housing choice across the region by taking actions to diversify housing options by type, size and tenure, and by creating opportunities to improve access to safe and secure housing that supports the needs of everyone in our communities, including the most vulnerable.

For many, there is limited housing choice in Durham, as some people have difficulty accessing affordable housing that is appropriate to their needs. The rental market is limited, and there is limited information available about the take-up of alternative rental housing options such as second suites. Home ownership costs continue to be the most affordable in the GTA (average resale house price is \$442,082), but this is still unaffordable to most people in Durham with low or moderate income.

The Region plans for healthy and complete, sustainable communities that are diverse, integrated and offer a mix of housing options. Regional policies support the objectives of developing urban areas as higher density, transit supportive communities that provide a mix of housing types and tenure to meet the needs of all residents. However, policy implementation and the effect of changes in growth management leading to higher density and transit supportive communities takes time to be fully realized, and as a result, progress is gradual. In addition, there is still much work to be done in ensuring an integrated approach to meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people in our communities.

Anticipated Outcomes

- 
Limited Progress More options for affordable housing across the region.
- 
Limited Progress Higher-density housing options.
- 
Early Progress Increased supply of safe and legal secondary and garden suites.
- 
Limited Progress An integrated approach to human services and housing supports for vulnerable people.



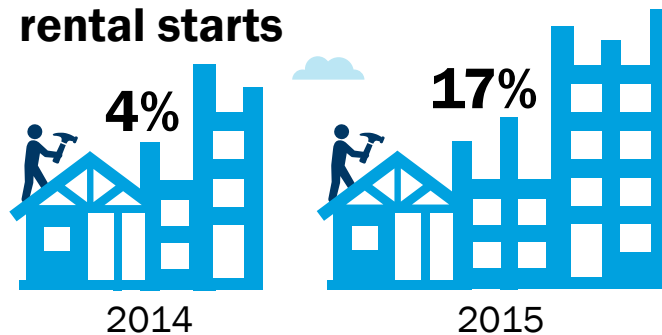
Choice



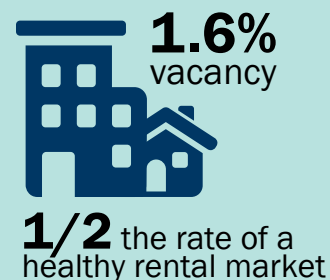
Regional Revitalization Program

The Finance, Planning & Economic Development and Works Departments hosted a workshop on Regional Approaches to Revitalization for area municipal staff. The workshop generated robust discussion, and led to changes in the Regional Revitalization Program (RRP) to advance the timing and flow of funds for Community Improvement Plan projects, and enhanced service delivery of the RRP to improve its promotion, co-ordination and communication. The RRP is a partnership program between the Region and participating area municipalities that aims to support redevelopment projects that would not otherwise be able to proceed without municipal financial assistance.

rental starts



Low vacancy rates and low rates of rental housing starts make it more **difficult to find suitable rental housing.**

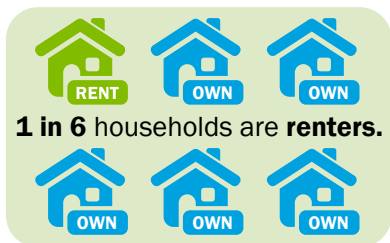


Affordable Home Ownership

In partnership with Habitat for Humanity Durham and using IAH-Extension funding, the Region provided down payment assistance to two low income families, and will assist an additional 6 families in 2016 and 8 families in 2017. Additionally, one vacant DRLHC semi-detached unit will be made available for purchase through the IAH-Extension Affordable Home Ownership Program.

LHIN-MSM Housing and Homelessness Framework

Durham continues to work in partnership with the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and other central east Ontario municipalities under the LHIN-Municipal Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Framework to promote collaborative strategic planning, improve co-ordination of service level planning, and align and maximize investment/funding opportunities between the sectors.



Goal 4 Progress: Strong and Vibrant

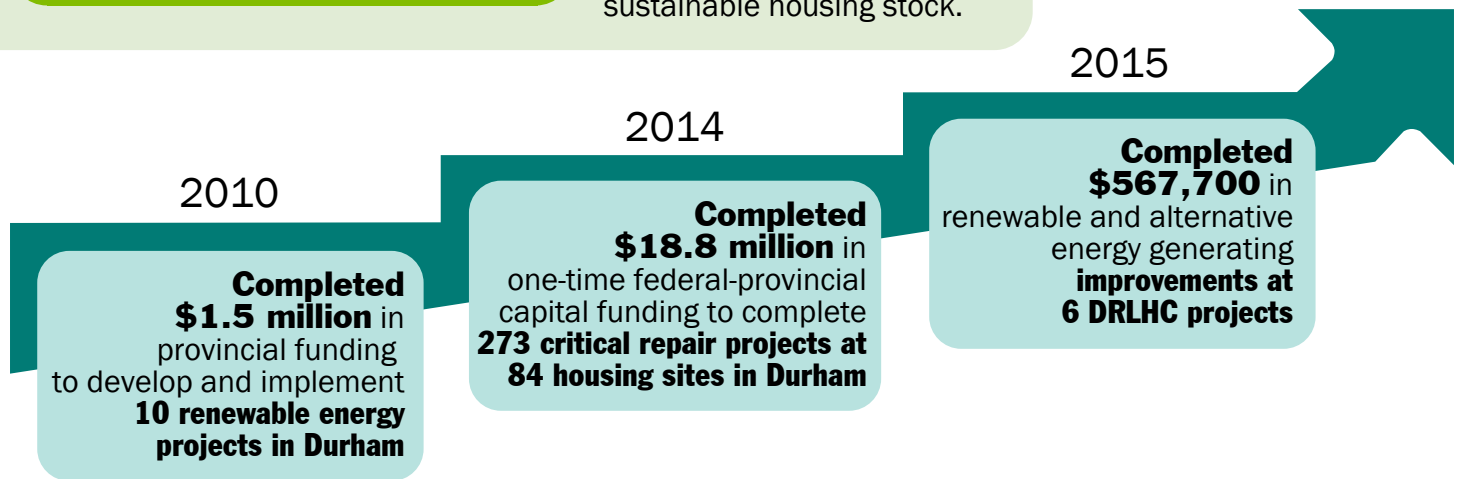
Strong and vibrant neighbourhoods is perhaps the most essential overarching goal of *At Home in Durham*, which commits to preserving the private rental housing stock, strengthening the social housing sector, and supporting an energy efficient, environmentally sustainable rental housing stock.

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

Progress is being made; however, there is still much to do to realize strong and vibrant neighbourhoods for people regardless of economic status.

Anticipated Outcomes

	Early Progress	Revitalized communities that include affordable rental housing.
	Limited Progress	High-quality, well-maintained, financially viable social housing stock.
	Limited Progress	A more energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable housing stock.



Neighbourhoods



Federal and Provincial Advocacy

The Region continues to advocate for sustained investments from the federal and provincial governments to facilitate the necessary capital repairs in the existing social housing portfolio. In addition, the Region has also requested assurance from the Province that it will retain the contingent liability associated with capital refinancing by social housing providers in order to access existing equity at no additional risk to service managers, like the Region of Durham.

DRLHC Asset Planning

The Region completed Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) for all 23 Regionally-owned projects of the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) to determine the adequate level of capital investment required to complete high-priority and critical repairs over the long-term.

The proceeds from the sale of three vacant DRLHC semi-detached units (estimated at \$450,000-\$480,000) will be reinvested in DRLHC capital projects to address urgent health and safety repairs.

An additional \$300,000 was approved in the 2016 DRLHC budget to address increases in capital and operating needs.



Green Energy Investments

Under the Green Investment Fund Social Housing Energy Efficiency Program, the Region allocated approximately \$385,000 in provincial funding to the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation for window and exterior door replacements at three of its social housing projects in Oshawa.



Goal 3: Greater Housing Choice

Task Force on Affordable and Seniors Housing

Regional Council has committed to the development of a Task Force to identify strategies that support the creation and maintenance of affordable and seniors' housing. The Task Force is likely to begin work in late 2016.

Age-Friendly Strategy

The Region is currently in the process of developing an Age-Friendly Strategy to design a community where older adults are engaged, supported, and enjoy an exceptional quality of life. A component of the Strategy will include the development of an Action Plan that will help Durham adapt its structures and services – including housing – to be more accessible and inclusive of older adults. The project is expected to be completed in 2017.

Pathways Out of Poverty

The Social Services Department is working in collaboration with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) to develop a research project to explore pathways in and out of poverty and homelessness for single non-seniors in the region. Research will begin in 2016 and is anticipated to identify opportunities to better align programs and services for this vulnerable group.

Goal 4: Strong and Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Sustaining Social Housing

At Home in Durham commits to the development of a policy to sustain the social housing supply beyond the expiration of operating agreements and mortgage maturity. As a first step, the Region is currently developing a strategy to address the range of issues associated with end of operating agreement obligations, in order to assess the Region's long-term commitment for providing legislated service level standards.

Poverty Reduction Framework

The Social Services and Health Departments are working collaboratively towards a poverty reduction framework with a focus on the seven priority neighbourhoods identified in the *Health Neighbourhoods Report*. Many low and moderate people living in these neighbourhoods are in need of affordable housing. This work in combination with the actions of *At Home in Durham* can revitalize these communities and improve the lives of the people living there.

Endnotes

Definitions:

¹Chronically homeless refers to households who are currently homeless and have been unsheltered or living in emergency shelter for at least six months in the previous year.

²Core housing need means that housing falls below one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards, and the household would have to spend 30% or more of gross income to afford the median rent for alternative housing that meets all standards:

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

Sources:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Rental Market Report, Greater Toronto Area (2015), Housing Market Tables, Select South Central Ontario Centres (January 2016), Core Housing Need (2011 as compiled by Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing)

Statistics Canada National Household Survey (2011)

Toronto Real Estate Board, Market Watch

Building on Health in Priority Neighbourhoods, Region of Durham Health Department (2015)

If this information is required in an accessible format,
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