

Affordable Housing Framework

**Building a better
future for all**



Region of Waterloo
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Our vision

The Region of Waterloo is committed to making housing affordable for all because we believe **communities thrive when everyone has a place to call home**. We provide world class affordable housing that is:

- Appealing and equitable to those of all incomes and family types;
- Well maintained, functional, attractive, and innovative in design;
- Developed in vibrant areas near schools, transit, health services, and cultural amenities;
- Integrated into neighbourhoods to foster community and inclusion;
- Co-located with greenspace including parks, gardens, and walking paths;
- Financially sustainable through mixed income communities and mixed use potential;
- Exceeding in architectural, environmental and accessibility standards; and
- Informed by the expertise of those we serve.

Mission

Create a sustainable, strategic pipeline of affordable housing projects to create a tenfold increase in the number of affordable homes we develop each year.

Shared purpose

Working with our partners and funders to build healthy, thriving communities that are accessible to everyone regardless of income level or life circumstances. We will build homes, we will build communities, and we will do it faster, together.

Strategic alignment

The Region of Waterloo is committed to making housing affordable for all. Efforts to realize this vision are guided by the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, the Waterloo Region Housing Master Plan, and the Region's Strategic Plan, Focus Area 4: healthy, safe, inclusive communities.

Objectives

The Region of Waterloo is building a better future for all through four main objectives:

Accelerate the development of affordable housing

Create 2500 new affordable homes in the next five years by:

- Investing over \$20M in affordable housing development in 2021/2022;
- Developing and maintaining a list of projects to be strategically prioritized;
- Developing an evaluation framework to leverage Regional housing land assets;
- Implementing the Waterloo Region Housing (WRH) Master Plan to create 600 new units;
- Prioritizing community engagement throughout for all projects; and
- Reporting on progress annually.

Create healthy, safe and equitable communities

Facilitate equitable communities through planning, zoning and other tools, including:

- Collecting and disaggregating demographic data to identify and address inequities in access to affordable housing;
- Reconsidering the definition of affordability and mixed-income;
- Partnering with health sector to support tenants to stay housed (e.g., aging in place);
- Clarifying development priorities based on community need (e.g., pairing housing support with affordability to help end homelessness); and
- Using inclusionary zoning as a tool to encourage the creation of mixed-income housing, including affordable housing, adding stability along the housing continuum.

Ensure a mix of rural and urban housing options

Create communities in the cities and townships by:

- Identifying municipally owned land and resources available to leverage; and
- Determining and addressing the housing needs and gaps in service in the four townships.

Respect the global climate and environment

Support green energy and active transportation by:

- Promoting active and accessible transportation by considering proximity to transit for all potential development sites;
- Requiring energy efficiency features above minimum building code requirements in new development projects; and
- Incorporating renewable energy options (e.g., net zero carbon design, solar panels, geothermal heating/cooling).



Building blocks

The Region of Waterloo is committed to realizing our vision of providing world class affordable housing through four building blocks:

Building block 1: Building the right team

In collaboration with human resources and other cross-departmental partners, we will build the right team to realize this vision by:

- **Identifying** roles and responsibilities, and ensuring the right combination of skills to succeed;
- **Developing** job descriptions for approval;
- **Engaging** in the recruitment and selection process;
- **Forming** a team of cross-departmental staff led jointly by Economic Development and Housing Services;
- **Introducing** the team to the Affordable Housing Framework, and identifying leads for each area of the work;
- **Clarifying** work plans, solidifying cross-departmental contacts, and developing communication expectations; and
- **Planning and facilitating** a community engagement and feedback session on the Framework.

Building block 2: Requests for proposals – capital and land

Generate an inventory of properties to support the requests for proposals (RFPs) planning process. The inventory should allow for site readiness at all properties, including land appraisals, environmental and transportation studies, and planning approvals.

Develop a requests for proposals plan to outline:

- **A process and schedule** for release of RFPs, including details on public consultation processes (preceding each RFP), as well as timing, communication, evaluation team(s), reporting on successful proponents, neighbourhood engagement, and the planning process;
- **The role of area municipalities** in providing feedback on RFPs, supporting evaluation, and expediting approval processes; and
- **Any funding considerations**, including details on reliable sources of funding with room to add new and future funding streams as available.

Building block 3: Acquisition and disposition of lands

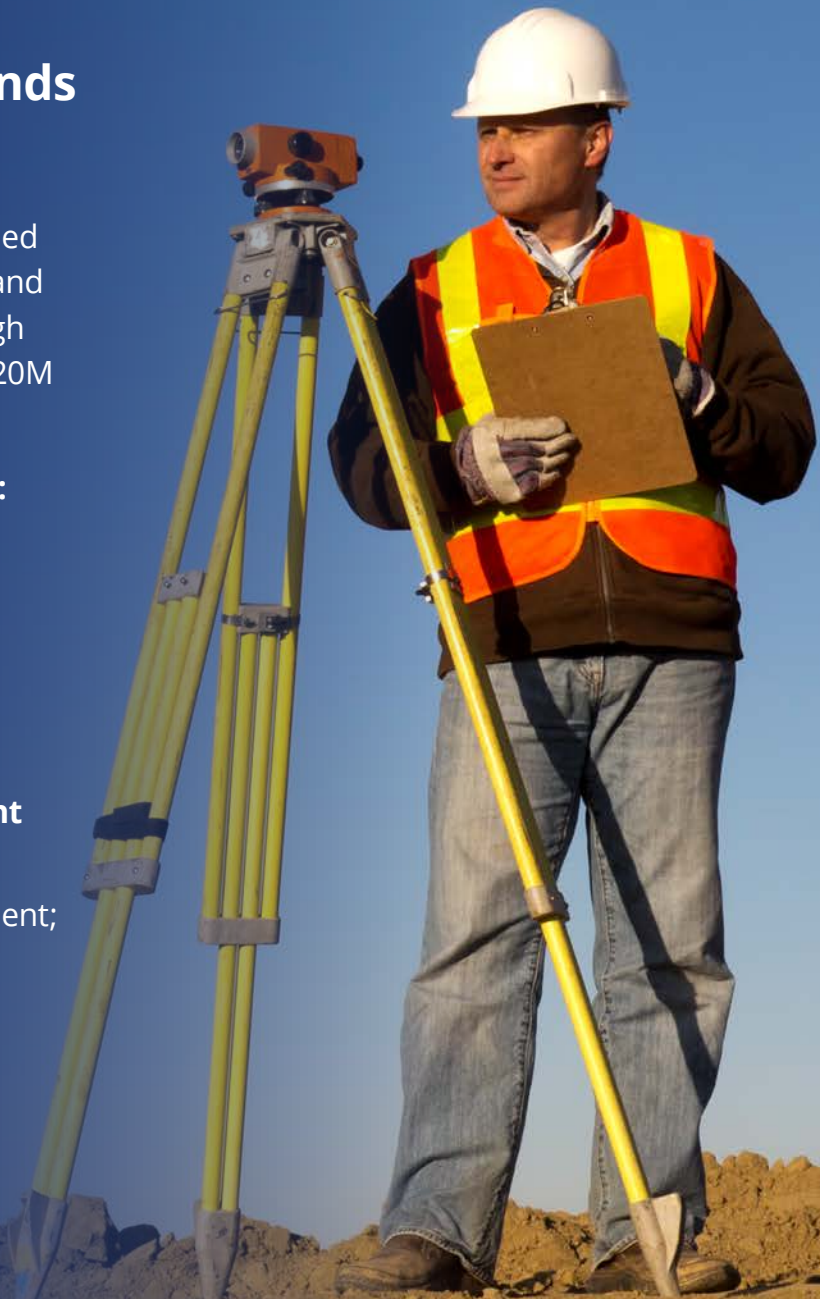
To further accelerate our efforts to generate new affordable homes, we will create an affordable housing land portfolio that includes existing Region-owned lands. Using this portfolio, we will sell or develop existing surplus properties and buy additional land to develop affordable housing. We will achieve this through strategic acquisition and disposition of lands and the purposeful use of the \$20M Regional strategic investment in affordable housing funding.

Facilitate land disposition for the development of affordable housing by:

- **Generating** land evaluation criteria, including development potential and land/resale value;
- **Evaluating** the inventory of Regionally-owned properties; and
- **Identifying** Regionally-owned lands to be disposed of in order to fund land acquisition and/or generate a capital contribution.

Establish a sustainable model for future affordable housing development through acquiring lands by:

- **Pursuing** strategic partnerships to facilitate affordable housing development;
- **Developing** an evaluation of lands process and preapproval amount to facilitate an efficient acquisition process; and
- **Identifying** new strategically located lands as available for acquisition to expand the inventory of suitable properties.



Building block 4: Reporting on progress

Facilitate the engagement of Regional Council and community members in realizing the vision and meeting the objectives of the Framework by:

- **Facilitating** a community engagement and feedback session on the Framework;
- **Identifying** key performance indicators to track our progress;
- **Providing** regular opportunities for input through the Housing and Homelessness Steering Committee;
- **Providing** an annual report and presentation to Regional Council on progress in a format that is accessible to our partners and community members; and
- **Developing** a mechanism for ongoing engagement with those we serve.

Framework highlights

The Region of Waterloo is committed to making housing affordable for all because we believe communities thrive when everyone has a place to call home. This Framework outlines an ambitious, multi-pronged plan to develop healthy, thriving communities that are accessible to everyone regardless of income level or life circumstances. Through our shared purpose and working with our partners and funders, we will build homes, we will build communities, and we will do it faster, together.

15 requests for proposals adding thousands of new units through a combination of:

- funding only
- land disposition only
- funding and land disposition

4 Waterloo Region Housing revitalization projects adding 217 new units:

- Wilson, Kitchener – 32 units
- Kingscourt, Waterloo – 70 units
- Langs, Cambridge – 96 units
- Weber, Kitchener – 19 units

Additional elements:

- Assumption of federal and provincial funding to bolster efforts [e.g., Rapid Housing Initiative, Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative]
- Includes supportive housing projects to help end homelessness
- Facilitates the planning and contributions of the philanthropic sector

For more information

519-575-4400, Deaf and hard of hearing (TTY): 519-575-4608, regionofwaterloo.ca/housing

