

2026 TO 2027 ACTION PLAN AND ADVOCACY POSITIONS

Implementing York Region's 2026 to 2035 Housing and Homelessness Plan

The 2026 to 2035 Housing and Homelessness Plan will be implemented through action plans brought forward to Council for endorsement. This action plan covers 2026 to 2027 and includes the specific initiatives the Region will undertake and advocacy positions to advance objectives under each strategic priority. This approach ensures flexibility to respond to changes in the housing and homelessness landscape and respond to emerging needs across York Region.

2026 TO 2027 ACTION PLAN:



PRIORITY 1:

Increase and Preserve Rental Supply

1. Build and enable new non-market housing		2026	2027
1.1	Advance Regional non-market housing development, including 62 Bayview Parkway in the Town of Newmarket, Box Grove in the City of Markham and The Queensway South in the Town of Georgina, an additional community housing site, and new emergency and transitional housing	●	●
1.2	Explore opportunities to integrate supportive housing into future community housing developments in partnership with non-profit providers, pending provincial operating funding	●	●
1.3	Continue delivering the Community Housing Supply Grant to increase non-profit supply and review eligibility criteria to reflect community needs, such as integrating supportive housing, while exploring opportunities to increase program funding where resources allow	●	●
1.4	Launch the Housing Affordability Resource and Non-Profit Predevelopment programs to enable development and expand capacity of non-profits	●	
1.5	Explore opportunities to leverage funding from other levels of government to develop temporary emergency housing facilities (e.g., modular trailers) with wraparound supports while permanent community, emergency and transitional units are built	●	●
1.6	Explore a Private, Non-Profit Affordable Housing Partnership Pilot to identify and evaluate benefits of leveraging cross-sector partnerships to create new supply, and report back to Council on recommendations	●	●

2. Preserve and maintain existing non-market housing		2026	2027
2.1	Enter into Service Agreements with community housing providers reaching end of mortgage to maintain affordability and preserve these units within the system, and identify opportunities to ensure other housing providers reaching the end of their program obligations remain in the system	●	●
2.2	Continue delivering Housing Provider Capital Repair Grant to support repairs and capital reinvestment in community housing	●	●
2.3	Continue to support non-profit and co-operative housing providers with Building Condition Assessments and by providing project management and technical support to complete repairs	●	●
2.4	Support revitalization of existing community housing sites through repairs and accessibility and green initiatives, including properties owned by HYI as identified through HYI's approved Energy and Utilities Management Plan , and 2026 Portfolio Management Review, targeted for approval by HYI's Board of Directors in June 2026	●	●
2.5	Pursue tactical acquisitions approach to preserve at-risk rental housing, including identifying suitable properties that could be added to the Region's housing portfolio	●	●

3. Leverage public lands and strategic partnerships to increase housing supply		2026	2027
3.1	Develop a framework for Regional land identified through the Highest and Best Use Study that sets criteria to identify if land is suitable for Regional development, for development by partners, and integrate with the existing Site Selection Framework for Regional Housing Development		●
3.2	Strengthen coordination with local municipalities to align Regional site opportunities with local land use planning, development approvals and infrastructure planning where housing development is proposed	●	●



PRIORITY 2: Help People Find and Keep Housing

1. Prevent housing loss		2026	2027
1.1	Develop a broad eviction prevention strategy and actions with community and municipal partners, including identifying patterns of housing instability to respond effectively with the right supports		●
1.2	Evaluate Region-delivered homelessness prevention programs, including diversion, and identify opportunities to strengthen these programs, including enhancing case management	●	●

2. Support system navigation and increase pathways to permanent housing		2026	2027
2.1	Expand rent subsidies, including identifying Regional funding options to pair rent subsidies to new community housing units and advocating for expanded and permanent Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) funding	●	●
2.2	Enhance Outreach Services supports for people living unsheltered or in encampments, including working with Public Health and Community Paramedicine to provide support for harm reduction approaches	●	●
2.3	Work with partners to develop a landlord engagement and retention strategy, including options such as head leasing		●
2.4	Develop options to enhance the drop-in service delivery model and expand drop-in services for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness across York Region	●	●
2.5	Work with service providers to strengthen how residents navigate the housing and homelessness system, by reviewing existing referral processes and information-sharing to determine how residents are assessed, prioritized and connected to appropriate housing and support services to identify gaps across the housing and homelessness system		●

2. Support system navigation and increase pathways to permanent housing		2026	2027
2.6	Integrate human rights-based and equity-informed principles across housing and homelessness programs through updated service standards, program design and staff training	●	●
2.7	Review program access points and eligibility processes to identify barriers for people with diverse needs, including newcomers, seniors, people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples		●

3. Build resilient communities and provide the right supports for people with complex needs		2026	2027
3.1	Conduct needs assessment and review best practices to support residents in community housing with complex needs	●	●
3.2	Expand supports for residents in community housing with complex needs		●
3.3	Work with partners to consider identifying principles and best practices to support people who use substances into program standards, as appropriate, and provide education and training for service providers		●
3.4	Enhance integrated case management functions across internal and external programs and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness	●	●



PRIORITY 3: Strengthen and Advocate for the System

1. Strengthen system leadership and coordination as Service Manager		2026	2027
1.1	Continue to work with local municipalities in support of local housing action plans and initiatives to increase housing options, including coordinating incentives, policies and partnerships	●	●
1.2	Convene partners to exchange knowledge, identify solutions and strengthen coordinated practices across the housing and homelessness system	●	●
1.3	Review affordable housing definitions across local municipal, Regional, federal and provincial programs and incentives and identify opportunities to improve alignment and support coordinated planning and investment		●
1.4	Explore Regional role in administering affordable units secured by local municipal planning tools and programs		●
1.5	Engage with Indigenous-led organizations to understand and identify opportunities to support housing needs of Indigenous people		●

1. Strengthen system leadership and coordination as Service Manager		2026	2027
1.6	Strengthen partnerships with local municipalities, emergency services and community agencies to coordinate the transition of people living unsheltered to housing and the remediation of encampments through a human rights-based approach	●	●
1.7	Create supports for local municipalities to respond to encampments, including remediation	●	●
2. Advance system advocacy and policy reform		2026	2027
2.1	Advocate to advance the Region's housing and homelessness priorities through intergovernmental and partner engagements, including securing greater investment in non-market housing and homelessness prevention and housing stability initiatives, and to urgently address the growing operating funding shortfall for critical programs responding to homelessness	●	●
2.2	Continue to increase community knowledge and awareness of homelessness programs and supports in York Region	●	●
2.3	Engage community leadership and external-facing tables across the Region to support advocacy and strengthen relationships with the Human Services Planning Board (HSPB) and other key partners	●	●
2.4	Work with HSPB to advance innovative partnerships and solutions through strategic partner and asset mapping, and an "Innovative Housing Solutions Pilot"	●	●
2.5	Work with HSPB on community engagement and advocacy through "The HSPB Housing Commitment for York Region" and intergovernmental advocacy and strategic alignment	●	●
2.6	Leverage pipeline of shovel-ready non-market housing projects to attract senior government funding opportunities	●	●
2.7	Submit portfolio funding proposal to Build Canada Homes (BCH), including Region-led and non-profit-led projects and work with other Service Managers on collective submissions and advocacy for a regional pipeline	●	
2.8	Continue advocating for full and sustained senior government funding to enable a proposed Safe House and Service Hub for sex trafficking survivors, and explore working with subject matter experts and community partners to determine the operating approach and service delivery	●	●
2.9	Engage with residents with diverse needs including seniors, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, Black communities and newcomers when developing new and reviewing existing housing and homelessness programs and policies	●	●

3. Enhance system capacity, performance and innovation		2026	2027
3.1	Complete a demographic data inventory across housing and homelessness programs to identify and respond to gaps in disaggregated data collection		●
3.2	Leverage technology to inform system planning and service delivery, including strengthening the use of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), Coordinated Access and subsidized housing wait list data collection and analysis capacity		●
3.3	Support learning and capacity building across the housing system through training opportunities and the sharing of best practices among housing providers, municipalities and service agencies	●	●
3.4	Develop a human rights and equity toolkit to inform development and guide design, implementation and evaluation of new and existing housing and homelessness policies and programs		●
3.5	Support housing stability projects through Community Investment Fund calls for applications	●	●
3.6	Review investment priorities of the Community Investment Fund to consider alignment with the renewed housing and homelessness plan	●	●
3.7	Direct Community Investment Fund towards gaps identified in the housing and homelessness plan, including upstream prevention and supports for equity-deserving communities		●

ADVOCACY POSITIONS

The following advocacy positions are directly aligned with the actions identified in the 2026 to 2027 Action Plan and are critical to achieving the Plan's outcomes.

Advocacy Position	Level of Government	Rationale
Federal and provincial governments provide predictable, permanent or long-term and sustained funding to increase non-market housing supply, maintain existing stock, provide sustainable housing solutions and stabilize and enhance programs and services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness	Federal/ Provincial	The Region alone cannot sustain the level of investment needed to build enough non-market housing to meet growing demand. Increased funding would see a one-third funding model for new community housing from each level of government, requiring \$216 million each from federal and provincial governments based on the 2026 10-year capital plan. Many community housing units need capital repairs which are not adequately funded by the current provincial funding formula. Chronic underfunding of the system by the province has resulted in a capital repair backlog for non-profit and cooperative housing providers of approximately \$145 million. Dedicated funding is needed for homelessness prevention and housing stability supports, including emergency, transitional, and supportive housing with wraparound supports to provide pathways to stable, secure housing.
Permanent, increased and predictable funding for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) beyond 2029	Federal/ Provincial	York Region has assisted over 1,500 households from the subsidized housing wait list to access COHB. Portable housing benefits play an important role in delivering affordable housing options and long-term housing stability for people living with low income, including those experiencing homelessness. COHB has significantly reduced wait times, as households can leverage existing private market supply as available, rather than waiting for a new community housing unit to be constructed or turnover. Portable benefits also provide a cost-effective solution since they do not require significant investments needed to develop new units.
Make the Region eligible for federal and provincial programs such as the Housing Accelerator Fund and Building Faster Fund	Federal/ Provincial	These programs provide significant funding for affordable housing initiatives, including new supply, and housing-related infrastructure to eligible local and single tier municipalities. As an upper-tier municipality, the Region is ineligible for these programs, despite being responsible for housing outcomes as Service Manager and for housing enabling infrastructure.
Alignment between Regional planning for housing and local municipal planning processes to identify, plan and deliver housing opportunities	Local Municipalities	The Region, as Service Manager, is responsible for planning and delivery of housing and homelessness services, including new emergency, transitional and community housing through Housing York Inc. Local municipalities, as Planning Authorities, are responsible for land-use planning and zoning. Continued coordination between the Region and local municipalities is critical to increasing housing options and supporting people experiencing homelessness.

Advocacy Position	Level of Government	Rationale
Leverage Housing Accelerator Fund and Building Faster Fund received by local municipalities to support Regional investments in non-market housing	Local Municipalities	As the Region is not eligible for funding under the Housing Accelerator Fund or Building Faster Fund, local municipalities that secure funding under these programs are well positioned to partner with the Region to create new non-market housing and achieve shared housing outcomes for residents.
The province reinstate housing services as a development charge eligible service to fund new community housing and make the Region financially whole as a result of development charge revenue shortfalls	Provincial	Amendments to the <i>Development Charges Act, 1997</i> included exemptions and discounts from Bill 23, <i>More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022</i> , and Bill 17, <i>Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025</i> , and made housing services ineligible for funding through development charges (DC), removing critical funding to build new community housing. Total DC revenue shortfall as a result of these changes to the Act for Housing Services' 2026 10-Year Capital Plan are estimated to be at least \$152 million.
When developing new affordable housing programs, prioritize grant funding/forgivable loans over repayable loans	Federal/ Provincial	Most federal investment in affordable housing programs has been in the form of loans. Repayable loans impact operational financing feasibility, and municipalities have limited debt capacity. Taking on these loans can place overall financial sustainability at risk. Deeply affordable housing models, such as supportive housing, cannot typically carry financing.
Increase social assistance benefit rates and index rates to inflation to meet basic needs and address cost of living	Provincial	Current social assistance rates are not sufficient to secure adequate housing. Housing instability and food insecurity both stem from lack of adequate income. Increases to social assistance benefit to match the costs of living will help ensure housing stability and prevent housing loss, making it less likely individuals will experience homelessness.
Increased operating funding, including supportive housing	Provincial	Operating funding is required to maintain affordability of units in community housing and operation of services in emergency, transitional and supportive housing facilities to provide the right services to support housing stability. Wrap-around supports are particularly important for helping individuals who have experienced homelessness maintain stable housing. While supportive housing options are needed, the Region cannot make progress in this area without provincial funding commitments. Full and sustained operating funding is needed for supportive housing, including a proposed Safe House and Service Hub for sex trafficking survivors, presented to Council in January 2023 .
Engage Service Managers on changes to subsidized housing wait list rules to address significant growth in numbers and cost of administration	Provincial	The Region's wait list continues to grow at a faster rate than applicants can be housed. Over the past decade, an average of 962 households joined the wait list each year while only 450 were housed. There has also been an increase in the number of Special Priority applicants for victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking, from 68 households in 2019 to 879 in 2025.