



# Progress Report 2019-2020

## Halton Community Housing Corporation Community Development Strategy

## Executive Summary

This report is the second-year progress update on the Halton Community Housing Corporation (HCHC) Community Development Strategy. Over the last year, HCHC has continued to work towards the outcomes identified in the Community Development Strategy approved by the Halton Community Housing Corporation Board in February 2018. These outcomes are:

- well-built and well-maintained communities;
- safe and secure communities;
- residents are supported, where required;
- programming is reflective of residents' needs; and
- effective communication with residents.

This report demonstrates progress made in delivering on all five outcomes over the past year. HCHC remains committed to working with residents and stakeholders on the strategy's implementation and will continue to report back to the Board annually.



Armstrong Terrace, Georgetown



Martin House, Milton



Pinedale Avenue, Burlington



Golden Briar Heights, Oakville



## Well-Built and Well-Maintained Communities

### Our commitments:

- HCHC will respond to maintenance requests in an effective and efficient manner.
- HCHC will proactively inform residents about capital work being done in HCHC communities in a timely and effective manner.

### Our accomplishments so far:

- A new notice template has been created to communicate with HCHC residents.
- An on-call/service desk responds to maintenance requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Between August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020, nearly 11,700 maintenance requests were completed across HCHC's portfolio.
- In 2019, HCHC invested \$2.2 million in capital improvements and \$7.2 million in ongoing maintenance activities to ensure HCHC communities are well built and well maintained. Capital work was preceded by notices issued to all affected resident. These notices provided details of work that was undertaken; informed residents of how they may have been affected and provided suggestions on readiness activities that residents could do before capital work began. Staff contact information was made available to assist residents with any questions and/or concerns they may have had.
- Targeted consultations were held with residents about the Wellness Hub at 410 John Street, Burlington. Residents were informed of capital changes scheduled to the ground floor and had an opportunity to provide input.
- Tenant and broader neighbourhood consultations were held about a fence replacement at Merchants Gate, Oakville. This allowed all stakeholders to provide input on the process. It also allowed HCHC to provide project details and timelines. Community feedback was incorporated into the final project approach. This proactively alleviated concerns that neighbours had regarding the project.
- Through Halton Region's COVID-19 response, HCHC provided ongoing communication related to the closure of common rooms, a process for emergency maintenance requests and enhanced cleaning procedures/protocols. Staff were also readily available to answer questions and/or concerns that tenants had regarding the pandemic and HCHC's preparedness and response.

### Our commitments for the next year:

- Use digital signage to enhance notifications to residents on capital work.
- Provide residents with an annual capital work schedule in Q1, 2021.
- Continue to respond to maintenance requests within established response timelines: emergency services within one hour during working hours, two hours outside working hours and urgent services within 24 hours.
- Build upon improvements made to further improve customer service to HCHC residents.



## Safe and Secure Communities

### Our commitments:

- HCHC will create more opportunities for residents to provide feedback to staff about community safety concerns.
- HCHC will evaluate community security on an ongoing basis and implement necessary recommendations.

### Our accomplishments so far:

- HCHC and the HRPS have co-developed a data sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will enhance how information is shared between both organizations. This MOU will help identify communities with elevated security and community safety risks and inform evidence-based decision-making on where and when to establish community hubs and other social supports to deter criminal acts.
- The HRPS has now assigned dedicated officers to each HCHC community. These officers will participate in community development activities and gain familiarity with their assigned community and residents over time.
- Over the past year, Threat, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (TRVA) security audits were completed for all HCHC communities.
- Numerous tenant meetings were held regarding community safety and security this year. This includes a TRVA-specific town hall held with residents of 5250 Pinedale Avenue, Burlington.
- The 2021 HCHC Capital budget was informed by recommendations from the TRVA review.
- As part of the Halton Situation Table, HCHC worked with community partners to assist 13 households in acutely elevated risk - they all remain housed and supported.
- Through Halton Region's COVID-19 response, HCHC worked closely with Public Health to implement procedures to minimize transmission of the coronavirus and enhance the safety of residents.

### Our commitments for the next year:

- Use data gathered from the MOU to help identify communities that are most in need and inform evidence-based decision-making on where and when to establish community hubs and other social supports across HCHC's portfolio.
- Implement the recommendations of the TRVA project incrementally over time.
- Continue to engage residents on matters of community safety and security concerns.
- Continue to ensure HCHC communities are in compliance with the temporary Halton Region mask by-law.
- Continue to work proactively with Community Safety and Well-Being partners and the Halton Situation Table to keep HCHC residents at elevated risk housed and supported.



## Residents Are Supported

### Our commitments:

- HCHC will support vulnerable residents to have successful tenancies.
- HCHC will provide opportunities for residents to enhance employability and financial literacy.
- HCHC will give residents opportunities to provide direct input into how they would like to be supported.
- HCHC will work with residents to promote healthy living.

### Our accomplishments so far:

- In partnership with 12 health and social service providers (including the Burlington Ontario Health Team), HCHC has launched a Wellness Hub at 410 John Street, Burlington to provide integrated health and social service supports to residents. Several tenant meetings were held to promote the pilot and allow residents the opportunity to provide input into programs offered, including an in-person agency fair where all organizations shared their service offerings and answered questions from building residents. About 126 households are eligible for, and have participated in, some hub pilot services. About 43 households have formerly entered into coordinate case planning agreements and are receiving regular wrap-around health and social service supports.
- Two new Community Partnership Agreements have been executed, increasing the total number community partners to 10. These community partners provide life enrichment activities to HCHC residents and are integral to achieving our Community Development Strategy outcomes.
- In partnership with Food for Life, food security programming was made available door-to-door during the COVID-19 pandemic to pre-emptively contain potential virus transmission. This food security program grew from 443 households to 797 households in summer 2020.
- In response to the financial hardship caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of Landlord and Tenant Board documentation was suspended for residents in rental arrears. HCHC used a modified approach to rent collection. Residents experiencing difficulties were navigated to income support programs, including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Ontario Works. Housing stability assistance was also made available by Halton Region and tenant repayment plans are also being used.

### Our commitments for the next year:

- Continue to work with 410 John Street partners to ensure that health and social service business requirements are captured in the design of the Wellness Hub.
- Continue to work with Food for Life and other community partners to support food insecure residents in HCHC communities.
- Continue to grow strategic partnerships and enter into more Community Partnership Agreements.
- Continue to work proactively with Community Safety and Well-Being partners and the Halton Situation Table to keep HCHC residents at elevated risk housed and supported.



## Programming is Reflective of Residents' Needs

### Our commitments:

- HCHC will create environments that support sustained community development programming.
- HCHC will explore opportunities for new strategic partnerships with support service agencies to help residents achieve their goals.
- HCHC will promote greater awareness of Regional community programs and services for residents.

### Our accomplishments so far:

- Regular tenant meetings were held across all HCHC communities to inform program decisions. Staff were made available to discuss community development priorities and document resident needs.
- HCHC is working to create a new community hub at 2300 Walkers Line, Burlington. A Request for Quotations was completed and a consultant has been selected. Renovations are expected to be complete by spring 2021.
- Reach out Centre for Kids (ROCK) has entered into a lease agreement with HCHC to deliver programming at the new community hub site. Halton Region's Children's Services Division has also partnered in the project to expand EarlyON Child and Family Centre services at the site once it is operational. Free programming will be available to 2300 Walkers Line residents as well as vulnerable children in the surrounding community.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a redesign of the community garden program was completed in partnership with the Halton Environmental Network, which incorporated physical distancing measures and e-learning. Participating residents received containers that were either appropriate for balconies or countertops. In total, 77 containers were provided with organic potting soil and pre-planted with seeds selected by residents.

### Our commitments for the next year:

- With the investment from the Children's Services Division, ROCK will transition some EarlyON Child and Family Centre programming into the space once renovations are completed. Programming will serve residents of the complex and other vulnerable populations from the surrounding community.
- As HCHC allotment gardens are re-opened, the container garden program will continue in parallel for the remainder of the year. HCHC will continue to grow the community garden program into additional HCHC communities over time.
- HCHC will continue to explore additional community partnerships and community hubs over time to address resident needs.



## Improving Communication with Residents

### Our commitments:

- HCHC will increase opportunities for residents using technology.
- HCHC will provide residents with regular opportunities to provide feedback to HCHC.
- HCHC will provide residents with clear and concise messaging in all communications.

### Our accomplishments so far:

- HCHC is piloting a project to replace bulletin boards in two communities with LED television screens and digital signage software. These communities are 410 John Street, Burlington and 2021-2031 Merchants Gate, Oakville. The screens will be operational shortly and will display key HCHC information. They will also promote other Halton Region, local municipality and health and social programs to residents.
- Key resident communication/notice templates have been reviewed, simplified and written in plain language.
- HCHC online content for residents has been expanded to include virtual videos of all HCHC communities as well as new community profiles.
- In summer 2020, a survey of all family and senior communities was initiated to determine capabilities to access in-home internet and access how the internet is being used.

### Our commitments for the next year:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the digital content, which will begin broadcasting in fall 2020. Based on results, the program will be expanded to other HCHC communities.
- Continue to review communications templates and existing policies and where required, simplify so they are easier to understand.
- Analyze final results of the resident internet survey to be completed in fall 2020. Staff will report back to the HCHC Board with findings in 2021.
- Continue to hold tenant meetings using varying communication channels and mediums.



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