

COM-C 23-2020



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July 24, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their July 24, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors passed the following motion as recommended in attached report NRH 9-2020:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report April 1 to June 30, 2020 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 9-2020 through proper channels to Regional Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Sendzik', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair



Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020) to Board of Directors

Recommendation:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report April 1 to June 30, 2020 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer

Walter Sendzik
Chair

Directors:

Walter Sendzik, Chair
Regional Councillor
St. Catharines

Gary Zalepa, Treasurer
Regional Councillor
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tom Insinna
Regional Councillor
Fort Erie

James Hyatt, Vice-Chair
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Ann Baker
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Lou Souter
Community Director
St. Catharines

Karen Blackley, Secretary
Community Director
Thorold

Barbara Butters
Regional Councillor
Port Colborne

Leanne Villella
Regional Councillor
Welland

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

HIGHLIGHTS:

Application Activity

444 received & processed



Work Orders

2,302 issued



Capital Program

37 purchase orders issued
1 public tender closed
6 projects ongoing



Rent Arrears

= \$110,958.69

or **8.60%** of the monthly rent charges



Community Resources & Partnerships

offered supports to
742
new referrals



44
partners

Non-Profit Housing Programs

62% deemed HEALTHY



Rent Supplement / Housing Allowance

1,465 units
10 new landlords



Niagara Renovates



- Inspections have started up again
- 8 homeowners approved for funding

Welcome Home Niagara

5 homeowners received assistance
1 was an NRH tenant



Housing First Project

9
Individuals / families housed



Appeals

= **0** on hold due to COVID-19



New Development

Hawkins/Dell



- Tambro broke ground on June 17

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

VISION

That the Niagara community will provide affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents

MISSION

To expand opportunities that make affordable housing an integral part of building healthy and sustainable communities in Niagara

As the administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) works to fulfill our vision and mission through six main areas of responsibility:

1. [Public Housing \(NRH Owned Units\)](#)
2. [Non-Profit Housing Programs](#)
3. [Rent Supplement Program](#)
4. [Affordable Housing Program](#)
5. [Service Manager Responsibilities](#)
6. [Housing Access Centre and Centralized Waiting List](#)



Definitions can be found in the attached Reference Sheet.



Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

1. Public Housing (NRH Owned Units)

DAY-TO-DAY MAINTENANCE:

In Q2, **2,302 work orders** were issued, representing \$638,074.15. \$11,595.81 of this amount was charged back to tenants who were held responsible for damages.

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
# of work orders issued	3,084	3,111	3,675	2,575	2,302

CAPITAL PROGRAM:

The Capital Program is responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH Owned Units) asset and planning for future sustainability.

In Q2, 37 purchase orders were issued and one public tender closed.

The Capital Program was responsible for six capital projects and 37 purchase orders valued at \$576,271:

- six projects
 - Carlton Street – replacement of balconies and railings
 - 4900 Buckley – exterior insulation and finish system – canopies
 - 52 Ormond – building renovations
 - 10 Old Pine Trail – bathroom replacements (currently on hold)
 - Powerview/Galbraith/Wallace – bathrooms
- 37 RFPs and RFQs – various consulting services, elevator investigations, health and safety repairs, structural repairs (roofing) and pavement retrofits

As of June 30, 2020, \$517,409 of the \$8,454,858 budget (excluding emergency) has been committed and or actually spent (6.12%).

TENANT MOVE OUTS:

Move Outs By Reason

Health	2
Long Term Care Facility	10
Deceased	15
Private Rental	5
Voluntarily Left Under Notice	1
Eviction – Tribunal	0

NRH Transfer	7
Moved to Coop or Non-Profit	0
Bought a House	1
Left Without Notice	2
Other/None Given	14
Cease to Qualify	0
TOTAL	57

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

In Q2, there were **57 move outs**. None involved eviction orders granted under the Ontario Landlord Tenant Board (LTB).

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
# of move outs	86	57	71	62	57

ARREARS:

NRH Housing Operations actively works to reduce rent arrears but saw a continued increase in 2020-Q2 due to COVID-19 and tenant job loss while they await provincial benefits.

	Jun 30, 2019	Sept 30, 2019	Dec 31, 2019	Mar 31, 2020	Jun 30, 2020
Rent charges for the month	\$1,257,090.00	\$1,267,460.00	\$1,286,793.00	\$1,302,721.00	\$1,289,907.00
Accumulated rent arrears	\$34,004.39	\$35,549.21	\$36,134.21	\$71,135.25	\$110,958.69
Arrears %	2.71%	2.80%	2.81%	5.46%	8.60%

INSURANCE:

In Q2, there was one claim settled, two claims expected to exceed the \$25,000 deductible and three statement of claims served.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

In Q2, we had partnerships with **44 community agencies** across Niagara. As a result of these partnerships, more than 200 support and enrichment activities were offered to tenants at NRH sites. Each partnership contributes to tenant lives and, in turn, the success of the Public Housing community as a whole:

- On-site community events, programs, workshops and activities were cancelled during the pandemic in accordance with provincial guidelines, however many partners found creative solutions to assist tenants during the lockdown.
 - The RAFT and Faith Welland distributed activity kits to family communities to keep children engaged in positive activities while after school programming was closed
 - Faith Welland gave out adult workbooks and hosted virtual competitions to reduce isolation in seniors communities
 - The Caring and Connecting Pen Pal Initiative provided pen pal letters that were warmly received by seniors
 - CyberSeniors and Castle promoted virtual activities and workshops for tenants who have internet access
 - Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold donated care packages to a high-risk seniors building with no on-site supports. The packages included masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, gift certificates for taxis and groceries and a note of support from Community Care.

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

NRH is working with partners to determine how to safely open in-person programs as soon as possible.

Also during Q2, NRH Community Programs Coordinators (CPCs) made **538 wellness calls** to check on tenants who are particularly vulnerable during the pandemic and offered supports to **742 new referrals of tenants in need of assistance**. Of those new referrals, **43% were considered medium-high need**, (e.g. child safety concerns, eviction, social issues, cognitive concerns). In particular, there was an increase in the number of tenants needing help with supports, referrals to other agencies and social issues.

2. Non-Profit Housing Programs

As administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, NRH provides legislative oversight for **60 Non-Profit Housing Programs (non-profit and co-operative)**. Operational Reviews are conducted to determine the overall health of each.

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
Healthy	40	40	39	37	37
Routine Monitoring	17	17	18	21	21
Intensive Monitoring	1	1	1	0	0
Pre-PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	60	60	60	60	60

NRH Housing Programs staff continue to work with Housing Providers as they move toward End of Operating Agreements (EOA) / End of Mortgage (EOM).

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

3. Rent Supplement Program

In Q2, there were **1,465 Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance units** across Niagara. In the Rent Supplement program, tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the market rent for the unit. The Housing Allowance program is a short-term program that provides a set allowance to help applicants on the wait list.

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
Fort Erie	32	32	30	32	31
Grimsby	26	24	22	18	22
Lincoln (Beamsville)	11	11	13	14	14
Niagara Falls	239	240	239	237	226
Niagara-on-the-Lake	5	5	5	5	4
Pelham	19	19	19	17	17
Port Colborne	62	65	64	67	64
St. Catharines	780	773	778	798	751
Thorold	61	56	57	61	61
Welland	203	200	198	192	259
West Lincoln	15	15	16	16	16
TOTAL	1,453	1,440	1,441	1,457	1,465

Variance in the Rent Supplement program are a reflection of fluctuation between agreements ending and new agreements taken up with landlords.

An **In-Situ Rent Supplement Program** has been developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH.

In Q2, NRH initiated new agreements with **10 new landlords**.

4. Affordable Housing Program

NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM:

The Niagara Renovates program provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes.

Niagara Renovates inspections for new applicants for the 2020-2021 funding cycle have commenced. Inspections of completed work are being verified by homeowner photograph; formal inspections will take place as soon as possible and will include all areas inside and

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

outside of the home to ensure compliance with program guidelines. Issues will be identified and a detailed Inspection Report provided to the homeowner.

NRH received \$545,920 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) for all three streams of the program.

Eight homeowners are currently approved for funding and NRH is working toward streamlining the program as we become more proficient at working under the COVID-19 rules.

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – “WELCOME HOME NIAGARA”:

The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan.

In April 2020, NRH received \$100,000 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) program.

In Q2, **five homeowners** received assistance through Welcome Home Niagara. **One of these was an NRH tenant.**

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
# of homeowners assisted	4	6	7	4	5

HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM:

The Housing First program helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing.

In Q2, **nine individuals/families** were housed through the Housing First program. Since 2012, Housing First has helped 460 individuals/families.

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
# of individuals/families housed	23	15	16	13	9
# of Housing First units (at quarter end)	198	197	202	199	201

17 of these Housing First units were created with NRH’s new development at 527 Carlton Street in St. Catharines.



Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

RENTAL HOUSING (NEW DEVELOPMENT):

NRH New Development

Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue, Niagara Falls		
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$3,600,000	
NRH Reserves	\$3,061,500	
Regional Development Charges	\$14,132,500	
Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation Seed Funding	\$106,000	
TOTAL	\$20,900,000	73

Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue

- Kickoff meeting with Tambro & Construction team held May 28 via zoom
- Consultant kickoff meeting held June 8 via zoom
- Issued for Construction (IFC) drawings released by Raimondo and distributed to construction team June 10
- Building Permits obtained June 12
- Tambro site mobilization started the week of June 15
- Tambro broke ground on site June 17
- Contract documents signed by NRH June 29
- Achieved milestones required for the release of 50% of Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) funding (documents have been submitted)
- Site trailer set up on Building A site (north east corner of lot)
- Fencing (ready fence and silt fence) installed around the perimeters of both sites
- Surveying completed (benchmarks, building locations, property lines)
- Site shaping/grading – top soil removed from both sites; Building A parking lot has been brought down to sub-base and is ready for base prep
- Conflicting trees have been removed from site via Tambro
- Storm and sanitary piping delivered to site
- Water main has been connected to the city main and roughed into building location (stubbed up in mechanical room location)
- Started excavation for footings at Building A



Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT #'S BY MUNICIPALITY:

Fort Erie		Grimsby		Lincoln (Beamsville)		Niagara Falls	
NRH Owned	116	NRH Owned	55	NRH Owned	61	NRH Owned	884
Housing Providers	389	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	41	Housing Providers	828
Rent Supplement	31	Rent Supplement	22	Rent Supplement	12	Rent Supplement	239
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	140
NOTL		Pelham		Port Colborne		St. Catharines	
NRH Owned	40	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	88	NRH Owned	1,017
Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	0	Housing Providers	139	Housing Providers	1,666
Rent Supplement	5	Rent Supplement	19	Rent Supplement	64	Rent Supplement	775
New Development	0	New Development	0	New Development	35	New Development	346
Thorold		Welland		West Lincoln (Smithville)		Region-wide	
NRH Owned	29	NRH Owned	394	NRH Owned	0	NRH Owned	2,684
Housing Providers	85	Housing Providers	425	Housing Providers	86	Housing Providers	3,659
Rent Supplement	57	Rent Supplement	194	Rent Supplement	15	Rent Supplement	1,433
New Development	46	New Development	167	New Development	0	New Development	734*

Note: there are no affordable housing units in Wainfleet

December 31, 2019

*166 New Development units are NRH Owned

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

5. Service Manager Responsibilities

APPEALS:

In Q2, **no appeals** were heard – they have been on hold due to COVID-19 but will be resuming virtually in Q3.

	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4	2020-Q1	2020-Q2
# of appeals	12	10	11	11	0

INVESTMENTS:

See Appendix 1 – Investment Report

6. Housing Access Centre & Centralized Waiting List

APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

# of Applications Received & Processed	444	# of Eligible Applications	425
# of Special Provincial Priority Status Applications	65	# of Ineligible Applications	19
# of Urgent Status Applications	78	# of Cancelled Applications	316
# of Homeless Status Applications	100	# of Applicants Housed	116

In Q2, **316 households were removed** from the Centralized Waiting List because they were no longer eligible, they found alternate housing or we were unable to make contact.

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST:

		2019- Q2	2019- Q3	2019- Q4	2020- Q1	2020- Q2
		# of households				
A	Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) waiting list:					
	Niagara resident RGI waiting list	4,926	5,012	5,154	5,322	5,264
	Applicants from outside of Niagara	849	897	977	1,045	1,078
TOTAL RGI waiting list:		5,775	5,909	6,131	6,367	6,342
	Housing Allowance: a set allowance to help applicants on the waiting list with affordability in the private market until housed in an RGI unit	742	747	742	739	723
A1	RGI waiting list demographics:					
	Seniors	2,344	2,362	2,455	2,514	2,487
	Adults no dependents	1,881	1,922	1,979	2,041	2,026
	Adults with dependents	1,550	1,625	1,697	1,812	1,829
A2	RGI list further segmented (#'s included in A & A1):					
	SPP – Special Provincial Priority (Ministry Priority): helps victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser	148	165	148	146	142
	URG – Urgent (Local Priority): for applicants with mobility barriers and/or extreme hardship where their current accommodation puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship	109	130	142	152	144
	HML – Homeless (Local Priority): provides increased opportunity for placement to homeless households	1,012	1,007	1,075	1,145	1,119
	SUP – Supportive/Transitional: provides targeted, provisional services to assist individuals to transition beyond basic needs to more permanent housing	11	12	16	23	10
B	In addition, NRH manages:					
	Overhoused: households who are living in subsidized accommodation with more bedrooms than they are eligible for	176	181	174	176	173
	Transfer: households who are currently living in subsidized accommodation and have requested a transfer to another provider	573	603	613	635	637
TOTAL RGI households on waiting list managed by NRH:		6,524	6,693	6,918	7,178	7,152
C	NRH maintains a waiting list for market rent units (62 Non-Profit Housing Programs):					
	Market: applicants who have applied for a market rent unit in the Non-Profit Housing Programs portfolio	723	752	784	810	805
TOTAL households on waiting list managed by NRH:		7,274	7,445	7,702	7,988	7,157
TOTAL individuals on waiting list managed by NRH:		12,577	13,059	13,587	14,197	14,180

Note: the above chart includes only those who apply to the Centralized Waiting List and does not capture the full number of those in need of affordable housing in Niagara.

Q2 (April 1 to June 30, 2020)

ESTIMATED WAIT TIMES:

CITY	SENIORS Age 55 and older		SINGLES Age 16-54		HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEPENDENTS			
	Bachelor	1 Bed	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
	YEARS							
Fort Erie	-	11	3	7	2	2	6	-
Grimsby	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	-	6	-	10	6	10	-	-
Niagara Falls	5	7	-	18	5	5	12	16
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port Colborne	-	8	-	12	5	3	4	-
St. Catharines	-	5	9	16	3	3	3	11
Thorold	-	7	-	13	3	11	-	-
Welland	-	6	7	16	7	3	8	7
West Lincoln	-	5	-	-	10	6	-	-

- no units of this size available in this community

January 2020

Please note:

- wait time information can fluctuate and is an approximation only
- wait times may not reflect the actual time one may wait for affordable housing

Quarterly Report on Cash / Investments for Period Ending June 30, 2020

	This Quarter Balance	Last Quarter Balance	Variance \$	Variance %	Comments
CURRENT BANK ACCOUNT					
Royal Bank account used for day-to-day operations for the owned units. Also to cash flow various short terms programs funded by Prov and Fed gov't usch as development, homeownership and capital repair programs.	6,248,805.63	2,873,337.94	3,375,467.69	117.48%	Since the February 2016 transition to PeopleSoft, day-to-day accounts payable transactions are paid by the Region through PeopleSoft. Reconciliation of the due to the Region account will be performed on a quarterly basis to transfer amounts due to the Region.

INVESTMENTS					
Various investment vehicles are used to protect and optimize the cash that is held for specified purposes. Investments are both short-term and long-term in nature. These funds are intended to ensure continued growth without capital erosion by inflation.					
Current Instruments:	2 Year GIC, \$188,000; due date is 08/17/2020; interest rate of 2.65% to 2.74%				
RBC High Interest Savings Account = \$5,577,342	2 Year GIC, \$376,000; due date is 08/20/2020; interest rate of 2.60% to 2.65%				
	2 Year GIC, \$264,280; due date is 08/21/2020; interest rate of 2.53%				
Total	6,444,508.04	6,437,236.81	7,271.23	0.11%	

Q2 Report on Reserves as at June 30, 2020

COM-C 23-2020

Description	Balances at December 31, 2019	Year-to-date Net Transfers from (to) Operating	Year-to-date Capital Transfers	Balance at June 30, 2020	Forecasted Net Transfers Forecast from (to) Operating	Forecasted Balance at December 31, 2020
NRH Owned Units Public/Local Housing Corp:						
Jubilee/Broad oak	287,569	36,000	-	323,569	36,000	359,569
Fitch Street	350,040	44,500	-	394,540	44,500	439,040
Carlton	210,000	40,500	-	250,500	40,500	291,000
Other Owned Units	5,140,075	650,000	(2,311,513)	3,478,562	649,999.98	4,128,562
NRH Owned Units Public/Local Housing Corp TOTAL	5,987,684	771,000	(2,311,513)	4,447,171	771,000	5,218,171
Niagara Regional Housing:						
Emergency Capital Funding for Housing Providers	3,199,268	770,463	-	3,969,731	770,463	4,740,195
Title Normalization for NRH Owned Units	712,381	-	-	712,381	-	712,381
New Initiatives, other social housing purposes and any new deposits are added to this category	4,316,390	(250,000)	(2,944,080)	1,122,310	-	1,122,310
Niagara Regional Housing TOTAL	8,228,039	520,463	(2,944,080)	5,804,422	770,463	6,574,886
Total NRH Capital Reserves	\$ 14,215,723	\$ 1,291,463	\$ (5,255,593)	\$ 10,251,593	\$ 1,541,463	\$ 11,793,056
NRH Rent Supplement:	266,301	(8,500)	-	257,801	(8,500)	249,301
NRH Stabilization Reserves TOTAL	\$ 266,301	\$ (8,500)	\$ -	\$ 257,801	\$ (8,500)	\$ 249,301
NRH Employee Future Benefits:	792,733	-	-	792,733	-	792,733
NRH Future Liability Reserves TOTAL	\$ 792,733	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 792,733	\$ -	\$ 792,733
Total	\$ 15,274,757	\$ 1,282,963	\$ (5,255,593)	\$ 11,302,127	\$ 1,532,963	\$ 12,835,090

Interest no longer applied by approval of Regional Council (CSD 02-2013).

503 NRH Owned Units Public/Local Housing Corp: This reserve was set-up by the Board of Directors as a Reserve Fund in September 2004 for capital expenses related to the NRH owned units. This reserve includes specific reserve balances to support 3 properties (Jubilee/Broad oak, Fitch, Carlton) based on the reserve fund studies completed to ensure sustainable. The balance is for all other owned units.

502 Niagara Regional Housing
This reserve includes three major elements: (1) Emergency Capital Funding for Housing Providers - *intent to support capital repair program for housing providers; surplus from housing programs should be directed to this component of the reserve* (2) Title Normalization for NRH Owned Units (3) New Initiatives / New Development

NRH Rent Supplement: This fund was set-up by the Board of Directors in December 2008 (year end) for a new Rent Supplement program. This Rent Supplement program is budgeted annually and withdrawal from the Reserve matches that year's expenditures.

NRH Employee Future Benefits: This fund was set-up by the Board of Directors in 2011 to fund Employee Future Benefits. (retiree benefits, sick leave, vacation. etc.).