
MEMORANDUM

COM-C 25-2020

Subject: Activities related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for June, July and August 2020

Date: September 8, 2020

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

Further to council direction in October (COM 40-2019), staff continue to provide regular updates about activities, local targets, outcomes and challenges related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), as new information is available.

The following highlights activities related to the HHAP in June, July and August 2020:

- Staff continue to consider responses to COVID-19 that can be leveraged as part of the ongoing housing and homelessness system after the pandemic response has ended.
- The Niagara Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) team implemented designated coverages areas and case loads to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure complete coverage within the region. Service access was enhanced with the introduction of community referrals by calling 211. Collaboration with REACH Niagara has made it possible for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to meet virtually with a primary care physician at an encampment. Additionally, the Niagara Assertive Street Outreach Team piloted a tool to map and track activity at encampments across the region. According to Built for Zero Canada's By-Name List guidelines – 'In order to truly end homelessness, communities must ensure that they are not only conducting street outreach throughout their entire geography but that the outreach is coordinated and documented.'
- The housing-focused shelter pilot has been extended through December. This initiative supports individuals and families struggling with chronic homelessness to access a low-barrier emergency shelter and referral to permanent housing and case

management supports. The pilot continues to support Niagara's efforts, related to Built for Zero Canada, using a By-Name Priority list to coordinate access to Niagara's Housing First and Home for Good supportive housing programs.

- Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) continued to work on finalizing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the NRH Affordable Housing Master Plan, which will provide a long-term road map to ensure the sustainability of existing affordable housing stock and outline the future needs for housing in Niagara.
- NRH engaged a contractor to renovate the basement units at 12 St. David's Road and prepared the tender package for 52 Ormond Street, which will together provide five new units of affordable housing.
- NRH partnered with 37 new in situ units/landlords, which will provide rent-geared-to-income subsidy to tenants in their current homes.
- The Planning and Development Services team has responded to changes from the province that impact the new Official Plan. In June 2020, the Province released draft Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, which proposes to extend the planning horizon of the Growth Plan from 2041 to 2051, and introduces new population and employment forecasts. Planning and Development Services staff submitted comments on draft Amendment 1 through the Environmental Registry by the provincial deadline in July 2020, and are waiting for the province to provide final numbers. The existing Growth Plan states that Niagara will plan to grow by 74,000 jobs and 150,000 people by the year 2041. When the amendment is finalized, forecasted residential growth will be greater than the current 2041 forecasts. This means that the Region must plan for a greater share of population and employment, and determine the resulting impacts on housing need and distribution. The new numbers will be included as part of the new Official Plan and Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Staff has resumed work related to the HHAP working groups to support broader community engagement in completing the 75 outstanding activities outlined in Niagara's updated 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. By the end of August, three working groups had met. Engagement of new members for the

remaining six working groups occurred in August, with the working groups to convene in September and early October.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner