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November 3, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their October 15, 2021 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors approved the attached report NRH 12-2021 and recommended this report be forwarded to the Budget Review Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 12-2021 through proper channels to the Budget Review Committee of the Whole.

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

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**Subject:** Proposed Niagara Regional Housing 2022 Operating Budget Submission  
**Report to:** Board of Directors of Niagara Regional Housing  
**Report date:** Friday, October 15, 2021

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## Recommendations

1. That the Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors **APPROVE** the proposed NRH 2022 operating budget submission of \$3,881,897 including the following:
  - 1.1. An increase of \$81,512 or 2% to the base budget to support operating expenses;
  - 1.2. An increase of \$40,756 or 1% to support capital financing;
  - 1.3. A reduction of \$340,963 or 8.3% to offset the cost of the addition of 4 FTEs in Niagara Region's Housing Services Division which will directly support NRH operations, subject to approval of the related FTEs and costs by Regional Council as part of the Levy budget at the Budget Review Committee of the Whole (BRCOTW) meeting on December 9, 2021;
2. That this report **BE REFERRED** to the BRCOTW meeting on November 25, 2021 for consideration as part of the 2022 operating budget deliberations.

## Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed 2022 Operating Budget for NRH.
- At Niagara Region's Budget Review Committee of the Whole (BRCOTW) meeting June 17, 2021, budget planning for 2022 was presented including a strategy of base increases not exceeding 2% and a separate increase of 1% to support capital financing.
- NRH acted as Service Manager for Community Housing on behalf of Niagara Region until May 30, 2021, when the responsibility was transitioned to the Niagara Region. The NRH operating budget is presented for approval under the new model, which is for the oversight and operation of NRH owned units, with regional employees providing support through the existing shared services agreement.
- Additional staff resources to support NRH operations and the growing portfolio of owned units are required. The funding source for additional staffing resources to

support NRH operations has been identified within the proposed NRH budget request. The FTEs and associated cost are part of the Niagara Region’s Housing Services Division budget and are subject to approval from Regional Council at BRCOTW on December 9, 2021. Appendices 4 and 5 are included for information only.

- The proposed budget includes one-time, incremental costs due to COVID-19 of \$412 thousand for increased cleaning, PPE and security at owned units and is recommended to be funded from the Regional Taxpayer Relief reserve.

## Financial Considerations

The 2022 NRH operating budget was prepared in alignment with the strategy received by Council which outlined a 2% budget increase to maintain base services and a separate 1% increase to support capital financing. The 2022 NRH budget also includes an 8.3% reduction in order to fund the addition of four FTEs in Niagara Region’s Housing Services Division which will directly support NRH operations through a shared services agreement.

The 2022 proposed operating budget is provided in table 1.

Table 1: Proposed NRH 2022 Operating Budget (in thousands)

Item	2021	2022	\$ Change	% Change
Gross Expenditure	\$21,864	\$21,786	(\$77)	-0.4%
Gross Revenue	(17,763)	(17,604)	159	0.9%
<b>Budget for Base Services</b>	<b>4,101</b>	<b>4,182</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
Capital Financing increase		41	41	1.0%
Reduction to fund four Housing Services FTEs		(341)	(341)	-8.3%
<b>Net Budget before Indirect Allocations</b>	<b>\$4,101</b>	<b>\$3,882</b>	<b>(\$219)</b>	<b>-5.3%</b>

## Analysis

The following highlights the changes in the proposed 2022 operating budget for base services as compared to the 2021 approved budget.

#### Compensation:

- \$17 thousand increase (5.6%) is driven by the alignment to trends in the 2021 actual spend on building attendant allowances.

#### Administrative:

- The 2022 budget includes \$400 thousand to complete new building condition assessments (BCAs) for owned units which will be funded by the NRH Owned Units reserve. The BCAs are used to inform the capital planning process and were previously completed in 2017.

#### Occupancy and Infrastructure:

- \$302 thousand increase (1.9%) is primarily driven by the following:
  - \$173 thousand increase for the occupancy costs of the new bridge housing and supportive housing facilities becoming operational in 2022, recovered through Intercompany Charges from the Homelessness Services division.
  - \$205 thousand increase in utility costs based on 2020 and 2021 trends and utility rate forecasts.

#### Financial Expenditures:

- \$427 thousand (23.7%) decrease is driven primarily by the following:
  - \$322 thousand decrease to the NRH/LHC-Debenture expense due to debt reduction owed to the province as four agreements have expired.
  - \$105 thousand decrease in bad debt expenses based on recent trends.

#### Transfers to Reserves:

- \$198 thousand decrease (6.9%) in the transfer to the NRH owned units reserve, which is required to achieve a 2% base budget increase in alignment with Niagara Region's corporate budget strategy given the base budget pressures explained in this report. The transfers to capital reserves remains sufficient to fund 30% of the 2022 ten year capital plan by the NRH Owned Units reserve as presented to the Board in report 21-202-5.4 "Proposed Niagara Regional Housing 2022 Capital Budget Submission"

#### Intercompany Charges:

- \$173 thousand recovery is from Niagara Region's Homelessness Services division to fund the occupancy costs of the bridge housing and supportive housing facilities

#### Federal and Provincial Grants:

- \$545 thousand decrease (40.1%) from scheduled service manager funding associated primarily with the expiration of the four debenture agreements noted above in Financial Expenditures.

#### Transfers From Reserves:

- The 2022 budget includes a \$400 thousand transfer from the Owned Units Reserve to fund the BCAs as explained in Administrative, above.

#### **Program Changes**

The following items are separate from the base services budget included for 2022.

#### Capital Financing Increase

In alignment with the Niagara Region's budget strategy presented and received by Council at the Budget Review Committee of the Whole meeting on June 17, 2021, a \$41 thousand (1%) increase has been included for 2022 to support capital financing. This increase is detailed in the business case included in Appendix 2.

#### 2022 COVID-19 costs

Services included in the 2022 budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic are similar to 2021 and include \$245 thousand (\$223 thousand 2021) for enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols and \$172 thousand (\$140 thousand 2021) for enhanced security protocols. These costs are recommended to be funded with \$417 thousand by the Niagara Region's Taxpayer Relief Reserve for a net zero impact on the NRH budget. This program is detailed in the business case included in Appendix 3.

#### Additional Housing Staff for NRH Operations

Additional staff resources to support NRH operations and the growing portfolio of owned units is required. The positions being requested are one (1) Community Program Coordinator for \$77 thousand (detailed in appendix 4) and three Assistant Property Administrators for \$264 thousand (detailed in appendix 5). These FTEs would be regional employees that would be directly supporting NRH operations through the existing shared services agreement. Since these resources would be part of the Niagara Region's Housing Services budget, they are subject to approval from Regional Council at BRCOTW as part of the levy budget on December 9, 2021.

A total of \$341 thousand in funding from NRH is required in order to offset the cost of adding these positions in the Niagara Region. The requirement for additional staffing costs were built into the operating budget projections when the associated capital projects were approved. It is recommended that \$167 thousand be funded by net rental

revenues associated with a full year of occupancy at the Niagara Falls new development site (Hawkins/Heximer), expected to be complete and occupied by December 2021. The balance of \$174 thousand is recommended to be funded through repurposing rental revenues from incremental units added in prior years. The revenues from units added in prior years were transferred to capital reserve until such time that related staff were added to the operating budget.

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

At the discretion of the Board, programs can be identified for elimination from or addition to the budget. If this action is taken, staff request the opportunity to provide impacts/risks with these decisions.

In the event the Board approves the proposed budget inclusive of recommendation 1.3. and the related FTEs and costs (appendices 4 and 5) are not approved by BRCOTW on December 9, 2021, it is recommended that these funds be directed to the NRH Owned Units reserve to support the annual capital program. This would result in a 3.0% budget increase for NRH in alignment with the 2022 budget strategy.

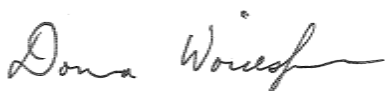
### **Relationship to NRH and/or Council Strategic Priorities**

The 2022 Budget will provide the financial framework to achieve NRH Strategic Priorities.

### **Other Pertinent Reports**

21-202-5.4	Proposed Niagara Regional Housing 2022 Capital Budget Submission
CSD 40-2021	2022 Budget Planning and Timetable

Submitted by:



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Donna Woiceshyn, CEO

Approved by:



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Walter Sendzik, Chair

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This report was prepared by Tyler Potts, Program Financial Analyst in consultation with Donovan D'Amboise, Acting Manager, Program Financial Support.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	2022 Operating Budget
Appendix 2	Capital Financing Business Case
Appendix 3	COVID-19 Costs Business Case
Appendix 4	Community Program Coordinator Business Case
Appendix 5	Assistant Property Administrator Business Case

## Appendix 1: 2022 Operating Budget



Schedule of Expenditures and Revenues  
DeptID: D\_71000A Niagara Regional Housing  
Fiscal Year: 2022

D\_71000A

	2021	2022				2022			
	Budget	Total Base	Base Variance	Base Variance %	Total Program	Total	Total Variance	Total Variance %	
	Total	Services			Changes				
A_40000AB Compensation	307,296	324,490	17,194	5.6%	10,390	334,880	27,584	9.0%	
A_41000AB Administrative	368,950	768,850	399,900	108.4%	7,245	776,095	407,145	110.4%	
A_44000AB Operational & Supply	57,000	57,000	-	30.0%	1,275	58,275	1,275	2.2%	
A_50000AB Occupancy & Infrastructure	16,331,640	16,634,013	302,373	1.9%	726,521	17,360,534	1,028,894	6.3%	
A_52000AB Equipment, Vehicles,Technology	135,733	138,148	2,415	1.8%	-	138,148	2,415	1.8%	
A_58000AB Financial Expenditures	1,804,329	1,376,971	(427,358)	(23.7%)	-	1,376,971	(427,358)	(23.7%)	
A_75100AC Transfers To Funds	2,858,385	2,659,975	(198,410)	(6.9%)	(70,930)	2,589,045	(269,340)	(9.4%)	
A_60000AC Allocation Between Departments	220	(172,990)	(173,210)	(78,733.2%)	-	(172,990)	(173,210)	(78,733.3%)	
<b>Gross Expenditure Subtotal</b>	<b>21,863,553</b>	<b>21,786,456</b>	<b>(77,097)</b>	<b>(0.4%)</b>	<b>674,501</b>	<b>22,460,958</b>	<b>597,405</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	
A_31200AB Federal & Provincial Grants	(1,359,174)	(814,091)	545,083	(40.1%)	-	(814,091)	545,083	(40.1%)	
A_34950AB Other Revenue	(16,403,787)	(16,390,261)	13,526	(0.1%)	(557,342)	(16,947,603)	(543,816)	3.3%	
A_75000AC Transfers From Funds	-	(400,000)	(400,000)	0.0%	(417,366)	(817,366)	(817,366)	0.0%	
<b>Gross Revenue Subtotal</b>	<b>(17,762,961)</b>	<b>(17,604,352)</b>	<b>158,609</b>	<b>(0.9%)</b>	<b>(974,708)</b>	<b>(18,579,060)</b>	<b>(816,099)</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	
<b>Net Expenditure (revenue) before indirect allocations</b>	<b>4,100,592</b>	<b>4,182,105</b>	<b>81,512</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>(300,207)</b>	<b>3,881,898</b>	<b>(218,694)</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>	
A_70000AC Indirect Allocation	4,174,014	4,191,817	17,802	0.4%	349,783	4,541,600	367,586	8.8%	
A_70200AC Capital Financing Allocation	6,516,672	6,729,647	212,975	3.3%	5,639	6,735,286	218,614	3.4%	
<b>Allocation Subtotal</b>	<b>10,690,686</b>	<b>10,921,463</b>	<b>230,777</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>355,422</b>	<b>11,276,886</b>	<b>586,199</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	
<b>Net Expenditure (revenue) after indirect allocations</b>	<b>14,791,278</b>	<b>15,103,568</b>	<b>312,289</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>55,216</b>	<b>15,158,784</b>	<b>367,505</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	



## Appendix 2

### Capital Financing

Department: Niagara Regional Housing

Committee Report: CSD 40-2021

Start Date: January 1, 2022

#### Description of Capital Financing:

This business case is for NRH to increase its transfer to capital reserves by 1%, or \$40,756 which will help NRH fund more of its annual capital program requests and reduce reliance on Regional sources of capital financial (reserves and debt). This request is consistent with Niagara Region's budget strategy for 2022.

Given the increasing demands of capital and the significant capital levy funding gap for 2022, the strategy presented and received by Council at the BRCOTW meeting on June 17, 2021 includes the option for an increase of 1% separate from base services to support capital renewal costs.

#### Business Reasons for Capital Financing:

This business case requests an additional \$41 thousand or 1% of the 2021 NRH net levy request. Including the existing base transfer to reserves from operating funds, approximately 30% of the annual capital program requirements in the 10-year forecast can be funded as presented in the 2022 NRH Capital Budget report.

The NRH annual programs is budgeted based on the expected timelines from the Building Condition Assessments (BCA). Based on the BCAs, the NRH gross and net capital budget requirement for 2022 was \$11.5 and \$7.7 million respectively. Given Niagara Region's significant capital levy funding gap for 2022, the Corporate Asset Management Resource Allocation (CAMRA) model prioritized capital investments leading to a reduced capital request corporately, including budget deferrals for NRH, which required deferral of \$7.3 million of the NRH gross budget requirement to align with funding available for 2022.

While a reliance on available Regional funding still exists, increasing the annual contribution to capital as proposed in this business case may reduce reliance on the available funding that is prioritized based on the CAMRA model.

#### Alignment to Council's Strategic Priorities:

Increasing funding available for capital reserves supports Council's strategic priorities of Responsible Growth and Infrastructure planning. Having capital funding available is important to preserve and maintain the housing stock.

## Capital Financing

### Risk Assessment: Priority

The NRH-Owned Units Capital Program provides for long-term planning to ensure NRH's physical assets will be preserved to an acceptable standard and values are maintained. The capital program was prepared in conjunction with the BCAs completed in June 2017 which indicated the Local Housing Corporate portfolio is generally in good condition. However, maintaining the good condition is highly dependent on building components being replaced once they reach the end of their useful life. Failure to do so would lead to more expensive capital costs, increased risk to health and safety and additional operating costs.

NRH maintains the ongoing local responsibility for the health and safety of resident's and the structural integrity of physical assets as per legislative requirements, including compliance to: Residential Tenancies Act, Housing Services Act, Ontario Building Code, Ontario Fire Code, Technical Standards and Safety Authority, Canadian Standards Association, Electrical Safety Authority, Occupational Health and Safety Act, and local by-laws.

### Financial and Staffing Impacts:

Line	2022	Future Years*	Duration
Transfers to Funds	\$40,756	\$40,756	Permanent
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>\$40,756</b>	<b>\$40,756</b>	
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>\$40,756</b>	<b>\$40,756</b>	

*\*total annual budget impact*

#### Prepared by:

Tyler Potts  
 Program Financial Analyst

#### Reviewed by:

Donovan D'Amboise  
 Acting Manager Program Financial  
 Support

#### Approved by:

Donna Woiceshyn  
 CEO NRH

Appendix 3

## Incremental COVID-19 Costs - NRH

Department: Niagara Regional Housing

Committee Report:

Start Date: January 1, 2022

### Description of COVID-19 Program:

Due to COVID-19, enhanced cleaning and security has been required at owned units. This program change represents the continuation of these enhanced programs through 2022. \$245 thousand is included for enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols. \$172 thousand is included for enhanced security patrols to help with the additional social issues in our communities due to COVID-19 and monitor compliance with protocols such as social gathering limits.

### Business Reasons for COVID-19 Program:

This ask is to support the additional cleaning requirements as recommended by Public Health Ontario for cleaning and disinfection of public settings to mitigate COVID-19 transmission and to align cleaning practices to meet the recommendation requirements. It also supports the enforcement of COVID-19 protocols that keep residents and staff safe.

### Alignment to Council's Strategic Priorities:

This ask supports Council's Strategic Priority of Healthy and Vibrant Community by supporting the fostering of a safe and inclusive neighbourhood and community ties to a larger strategic Community Safety and Wellbeing strategy.

### Risk Assessment: Priority

If this program is not approved, residents, staff members, and visitors entering or living in these properties may be at risk of contracting COVID-19 through contact with improperly cleaned/sanitized surfaces or gatherings in excess of provincial restrictions.

### Financial and Staffing Impacts:

Line	2022	Future Years*	Duration
Occupancy & Infrastructure	\$417,366	0	One year
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>417,366</b>	<b>0</b>	
Transfers from Funds	(417,366)	0	One year
<b>Gross Revenue</b>	<b>(417,366)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

*\*total annual budget impact*

## **Incremental COVID-19 - NRH**

Costs of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic are being corporately funded by the provincial Safe Restart funding, through Niagara Region's Taxpayer Relief Reserve.

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**Prepared by:**

Tyler Potts  
Program Financial Analyst

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**Reviewed by:**

Donovan D'Amboise  
Acting Manager Program Financial  
Support

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**Approved by:**

Donna Woiceshyn  
CEO NRH

## Appendix 4

# Staff Addition – Community Programs Coordinator

## FTE Request

Department: Community Services

Committee Report:

Start Date: January 3, 2022

## Description of FTE Request:

There are currently three Community Programs Coordinators (CPCs) responsible for the 2,927 NRH Owned Public Housing units across Niagara, which means that CPCs are responsible for almost 1,000 units each. This request is for 1 FTE which requires budget funding of \$77,093 which includes staffing costs for mileage, training and admin expenses. CPCs assist with the maintenance of successful tenancies through eviction prevention and the improvement of the quality of life in NRH communities through:

- Eviction Prevention through ongoing tenant support (e.g. hoarding, bed bug treatment for vulnerable tenants etc.) and assistance with navigating through social service systems and referrals to appropriate agencies
- Resolution and mediation of social issues
- Community Engagement through coordination of programs, activities and workshops

Since 2014, NRH has increased the housing stock and, at the same time, the number of tenants with complex needs has increased dramatically. There has been a demonstrated increase in mental health and addiction issues, family breakdown, and an aging population coping with declining cognition and increased isolation. This has forced CPCs to focus a majority of their time on the tenants with the highest needs and reduced their attention to early intervention for support and eviction prevention and community engagement to foster a positive environment to reduce negative behaviours.

## Business Reasons for FTE Request:

As NRH has attempted to address the shortage of Community Housing in Niagara, the volume of households on the CPC caseload has, and will continue to, increase. NRH has added 373 new units since 2014, including current builds expected to finish before year-end. An additional 60 units are expected to be added in the next year.

This added responsibility has been compounded by the dramatic increase in high-need tenants in the last decade, which has been worsened further by the pandemic. Public

## **Staff Addition – Community Program Coordinator**

Housing has long had a disproportionate percentage of vulnerable tenants who struggle with mental illness, addiction, family breakdown and/or the many negative effects of living in poverty. Even tenants without specific vulnerabilities often require support. There is more and more research indicating that many people living in poverty require assistance to live successfully because the stress of having to struggle to make ends meet leaves less “mental bandwidth” to take steps that could help break the cycle of poverty. In recent years, there have been more and more tenancies suffering with complex needs, often attributed to the hopelessness associated with the changing economy, skyrocketing addiction and mental health concerns and an aging population. Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, NRH’s CPCs offered supports to 1,051 new referrals of tenants in need of assistance, 58% of whom were medium-high need (i.e. tenant with serious issues or at risk of eviction). In 2020, this number increased to 1,981 and, by all predictions, will continue to increase as the impact of the pandemic becomes clearer.

It takes considerable time for CPCs to work with tenants with complex issues and connect them with the specialized supports that they need. With less attention available to the broader community, they are less able to identify and address issues that require early intervention and prevent them from becoming serious. They are also less able to focus on tenants who simply need some support to live healthier, more productive lives.

With additional staff and reduced caseloads, CPCs would be better able to support tenants before their issues become individual or community crises. They would also be able coordinate more community activities to promote tenant wellbeing and community inclusion and embed support agencies into the communities to develop trusting relationships. In the past, CPCs were able to devote more than 40% of their time to community engagement, but this has been reduced to less than 20% in the last five years alone.

When compared to another local municipal housing provider the units per Community Programs Coordinator is approximately 590, to Niagara Region’s 1,000 units. One additional CPC would result in each being responsible for 750 units, still considerably higher than the municipal comparator.

### **Alignment to Council’s Strategic Priorities:**

An additional CPC will allow for earlier intervention with tenants who need assistance, prevent more evictions and provide more time for the community engagement necessary to promote positive interaction and community pride in Public Housing communities, which aligns with Council’s priority of Healthy and Vibrant Community.

## Staff Addition – Community Program Coordinator

### Risk Assessment: Priority

Currently, with the increase in the number of units and the rapidly increasing need in NRH communities, CPCs no longer have enough time to devote to low need tenants and community engagement. Simply put, early intervention and community engagement helps increase the likelihood of successful tenancies, which means less damage to units, fewer arrears, less social issues, and less risk of eviction proceedings, all of which cost NRH valuable resources.

Without additional staff, CPCs will continue to be primarily crisis-driven and largely unable to intervene early with addiction, mental health and social issues that often worsen and become more costly over time. When dealt with at an early stage, many problems, like hoarding and conflict between neighbours, are more manageable. Early intervention is less time-consuming, not just for NRH, but also for the wide range of service providers (e.g. police, mental health supports, etc.) who often must become involved once issues have escalated. Early intervention also means a reduced risk of spillover problems in the broader community.

Furthermore, with their time preoccupied with high need tenants, CPCs do not have sufficient time to devote to community engagement and positive activities that embed supports, discourage negative behaviours, develop trust with NRH staff and partners and encourage greater neighbourhood connectivity. Successful community engagement increases employability, decreases criminal activity like vandalism and graffiti, increases literacy, improves family cohesion and provides recreational experiences that might otherwise not be accessible.

### Financial and Staffing Impacts:

Line	2022	Future Years*	Duration
Compensation	75,593	75,593	Permanent
Administrative	1,500	1,500	Permanent
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>77,093</b>	<b>77,093</b>	
Other Revenue	(77,093)	(77,093)	Permanent
<b>Gross Revenue</b>	<b>(77,093)</b>	<b>(77,093)</b>	
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Permanent FTEs	1.0	1.0	Permanent

*\*total annual budget impact*

This includes the annual costs for one permanent FTE as presented above, including administrative costs for cell phone and mileage. This position will be funded by incremental rental revenues in the Niagara Regional Housing budget from new units

## **Staff Addition – Community Program Coordinator**

expected to be occupied by December 2021, as well as through repurposing rental revenues from incremental units added in prior years. The revenues from units added in prior years were transferred to capital reserve until such time that related staff were added to the budget.

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**Prepared by:**

Wendy Thompson,  
Community Resource Programs  
Manager

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**Reviewed by:**

Tyler Potts  
Program Financial Analyst

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**Approved by:**

Adrienne Jugley  
Commissioner Community Services

For Information



## Appendix 5

# Staff Additions – Assistant Property Administrators

## FTE Request

Department: Community Services

Committee Report:

Start Date: January 1, 2022

## Description of FTE Request:

Housing Operations front line teams manage all 2927 of Niagara Regional Housing's (NRH) owned units. There are six operational teams responsible for delivery of all of our programs and responsibilities under the Housing Services Act and Residential Tenancy Act. Currently there are three Assistant Property Administrators (APA), shared between the six teams. With the increase in housing stock, workload, and ever-increasing level of accountability with property management, this is not sufficient to maintain our level of service to tenants.

## Business Reasons for FTE Request:

Building new housing stock is an important part of addressing the housing challenges facing the Niagara Region. By the end of this year, 373 new units will have been added to NRH current stock since 2014. In addition to these, we expect to add another 60 units in 2022 through new and on-going projects. The continuing work of these projects and the resulting additional units, although essential to address the need of a large waitlist, create further pressure on our current staff resources.

Additionally, in order to provide better customer service and reduce liability, there were significant additions to the teams' workload in 2014. It was decided unit inspections every 3 years was not sufficient to keep up with unreported maintenance issues and the expanding complex mental health issues including hoarding and self neglect. At that time it was decided they would be done in all units annually by staff in an effort to keep on top of these issues, provide better customer service and more easily identify vulnerable tenants. A restructuring was done and the APA job was created. Three APAs were added, however, this was based on two Property Administrator (PA) retirements, actually only adding one Full Time Employee (FTE). Over the years this has found to not be sufficient to offset the work added. Over time this has had a compounding effect with not enough staff time to complete all tasks. Tasks that were deemed non-essential have been deferred.

## **Staff Additions – Assistant Property Administrators**

With the needs of the community and individuals ever growing, more staff would allow for a more personal approach to help tenants stay housed. When compared to another local municipal housing provider the units per operational staff member is approximately 185, to Niagara Region's 225. Three additional APAs would result in each operations staff member being responsible for 182 units, in line with other housing providers. These additional FTEs will provide critical relief to current need and allow for continued expansion of portfolios to address the significant need for affordable housing in the Niagara Region. It will also allow staff to spend more time with tenants to meet their needs on site and keep them housed.

### **Alignment to Council's Strategic Priorities:**

As mentioned, three additional FTE's are essential to keep up the rate of unit development currently under way. Alleviating the housing challenges facing the Niagara Region will be paramount in allowing the Region of Niagara to continue to grow and thrive. These new builds and the affordable units they provide are invaluable in moving forward the Regional Councils objective of Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning and we believe the key to its success.

Community engagement is something that is essential to be able to discern and address the issues affecting each of our unique communities throughout the Niagara Region. Our staff know the importance of meeting tenants where they are and the knowledge and relationships built by these employees are invaluable. These additional staff will greatly increase the amount of time and service we can devote to our tenants, in difficult to reach communities, aligning to Council's priority of Healthy and Vibrant Communities in the Niagara Region.

### **Risk Assessment: High-priority**

In spite of best efforts and implementing several technology and business process enhancements, the addition of the unit stock and further pressure on staff due to the ever increasing need of our tenants have caused significant stress and has required staff to prioritize and triage concerns.

The rules around managing public housing can be very strict with a high degree of liability from various legislation including but not limited to the Ontario Fire Code, Housing Services Act, Residential Tenancy Act, AODA, OSHA, FIPPA, WHMIS and the Construction Lien Act. Staff in the field are the eyes and ears of Niagara Regional Housing that help mitigate this risk. It is paramount that there are enough staff in our communities to be able to perform these functions properly. The job of the APA's is

## Staff Additions – Assistant Property Administrators

multifaceted and includes many aspects that could lead to risk for the Niagara Region if not properly executed. One way they help lessen risk is monitoring the snow and grounds contract. With almost 1000 units per APA, spread across many properties and sometimes cities, it is difficult to do thorough inspections during snow events. This can lead to an increase in slip and fall complaints, forcing staff to prioritize this follow up, putting off other work. APAs also monitor the janitorial contract and ensure WHMIS protocols are being followed as required by the Ontario Ministry of Labour. As mentioned, APAs are part of a small group of staff who go to our sites and assist tenants in person. This is invaluable when helping someone who has a language barrier or doesn't have access to a phone and/or transportation. This is especially important when assisting tenants with annual paperwork that is mandatory under the Housing Services Act. The consequences of not getting the paperwork in is a loss of subsidy, which in most cases leads to a high risk of eviction. With a lack of resources here, Property Administrators (PA) and Community Programs Coordinators (CPC) have had to step in to help with this to prevent evictions.

In addition to their own responsibilities APA's work closely with the PAs and are paramount in helping them complete their challenging work. APAs help with Landlord and Tenant Board paperwork and assist with fire drills required under the Ontario Fire Code. Due to a lack of staff resources, as outlined above we have to prioritize complaints as, at times, there isn't enough staff to properly follow up and investigate all in a timely manner. This leaves the Region of Niagara open to some liability as a tenant can bring Landlord and Tenant Board applications against us if they don't feel we have done enough to preserve their right to "quiet enjoyment". In an effort to address the riskiest matters first, some work has had to be deferred. For example, we would like 10% of all work orders done to be inspected by staff to ensure work is completed to our standards. Currently there is not enough staff time for this, so we often have to assume work in units was done once billed. This is an uncomfortable long-term solution as it makes it difficult to ascertain if we are getting proper performance for pay from our contractors. In addition, asbestos log sheets which should be reviewed and updated every year have been skipped for lack of time in the past. Repayment agreements used to be checked every month and tenants notified if a payment was missed. Currently, staff do not have the time to do this, causing sources of revenue to go uncollected.

### Financial and Staffing Impacts:

Line	2022	Future Years*	Duration
Compensation	263,870	263,870	Permanent
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>263,870</b>	<b>263,870</b>	
Other Revenue	(263,870)	(263,870)	Permanent

## Staff Additions – Assistant Property Administrators

Line	2022	Future Years*	Duration
<b>Gross Revenue</b>	<b>(263,870)</b>	<b>(263,870)</b>	
<b>Net Impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Permanent FTEs	3.0	3.0	Permanent

*\*total annual budget impact*

This includes the annual costs for three permanent FTEs as presented above. These positions will be funded by incremental rental revenues in the Niagara Regional Housing budget from new units expected to be occupied by December 2021, as well as through repurposing rental revenues from incremental units added in prior years. The revenues from units added in prior years were transferred to capital reserve until such time that related staff were added to the budget.

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For Information