

# Niagara's Affordable Housing Strategy

Committee-of-the-Whole

September 7, 2023

# OVERVIEW

- PART 1 Housing Background
- PART 2 What is Niagara Region's Role?
- PART 3 Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis
- PART 4 Activities to Support the Strategy

# PART 1

## Housing Background

## PART 1: Housing Background

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### Affordable Housing

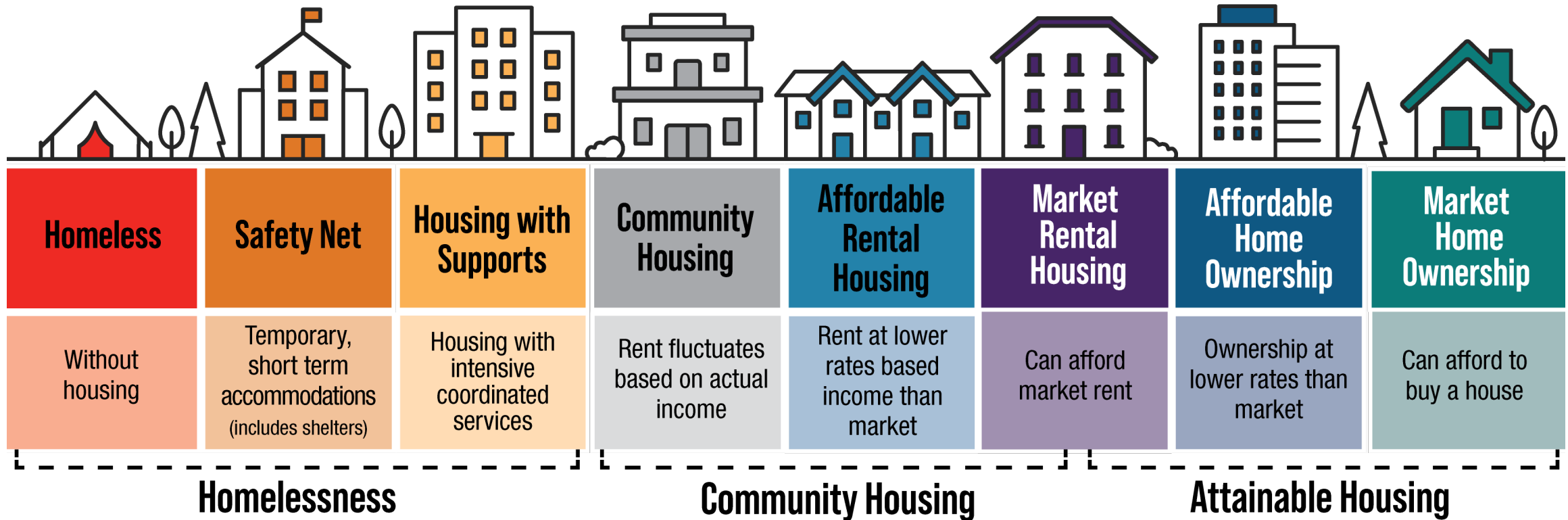
Costs less than 30% of a household's before tax income.

Households	Annual Income*	Can Afford (Monthly)	Needed Housing Supply
Low Income Household	Up to \$29,499	Up to \$737	Community Housing and Rent Supports
Moderate Income Household	\$29,500 to \$52,699	Up to \$1,317	Affordable Market Housing (Rental and Ownership)
Medium Income Household	\$52,700 to \$84,399	Up to \$2,107	Attainable Market Housing (Rental and Ownership)

\* Annual Income numbers reflect 2021 values and are being updated

# PART 1: Housing Background

## A Spectrum of Housing Options



# PART 1: Housing Background

## Future Housing Need

Total Housing Supply  
in 2022

**201,663  
UNITS**



Total Housing Units  
Forecasted For 2051

**298,645  
UNITS**



Total Number Of  
Additional Stock  
Needed Every 5 Years

**17,050  
UNITS**



# PART 2

## What is Niagara Region's Role?

# PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

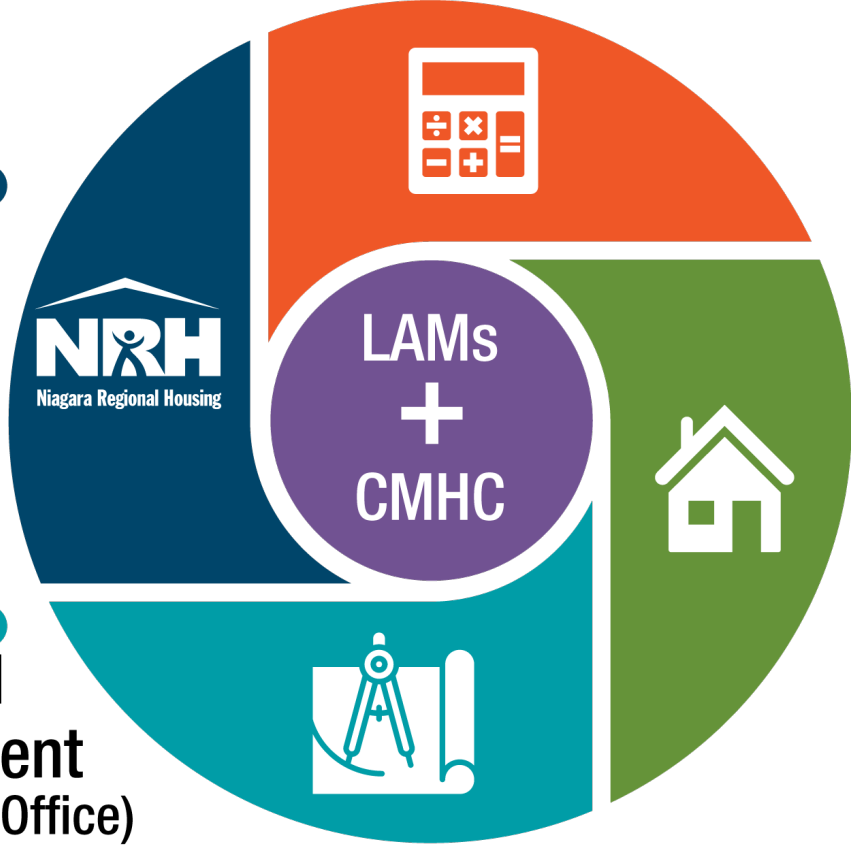
## One Team: Internal Coordinated Effort



Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)



Growth Strategy and Economic Development (Strategic Transformation Office)



Corporate Services (Finance)



Community Services (Housing and Homelessness)



## **PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?**

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# **Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness**

## **Housing Services Act, 2011**

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- Have a Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) and meet objectives and targets related to housing and homelessness
- Provide housing directly and establish, administer and fund housing programs consistent with Provincial policy
- Niagara Regional Housing manages all owned units

## PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

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# Provide Guidance for Growth and Development

## Planning Act, Provincial, and Regional Plans

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- Niagara Official Plan (2022) established direction to provide for a range of affordable housing options and minimum affordable housing targets.
- Policies and targets set out in the Niagara Official Plan will continue to be implemented through Local Municipal Official Plan updates
- Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act is changing the Region's role in planning
- The Province is currently reviewing the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan – proposing to remove definitions and requirements for affordable housing

## **PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?**

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# **Provide Guidance for Growth and Development**

**Bill 108: More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019**

**Bill 138: Plan to Build Ontario Together Act, 2019**

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### **Opportunities for Payments of Development Charges (DCs)**

- DC rate is frozen for Site Plan or Zoning By-law Amendments until two years after their approval

### **Installment Options:**

- Rental Housing: DCs paid in 6 equal annual payments
- Non-Profit Housing: DCs paid in 21 equal annual payments

## **PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?**

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# **Provide Guidance for Growth and Development**

## **Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act**

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### **In Effect:**

- Non-Profit Housing: exempt from DCs

### **Exemptions Not Yet in Effect:**

- Affordable Rental Unit: rent is < 80% of the average market rent
- Affordable Owned Unit: price of the unit is < 80% of the average purchase price
- Attainable Unit: Not yet defined

## Part 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

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### Additional Housing DC Exemptions

- Additional residential units in existing rental buildings and new residential buildings (the third unit will be exempt)
- Rental Housing Units will be discounted from 15% to 25% based on the number of bedrooms (higher discount for more bedrooms)
- Mandatory phase-in of DCs (starting at 80% up to 100% from years 1-5 of the By-law)

### Our Challenge Due to Legislative Changes

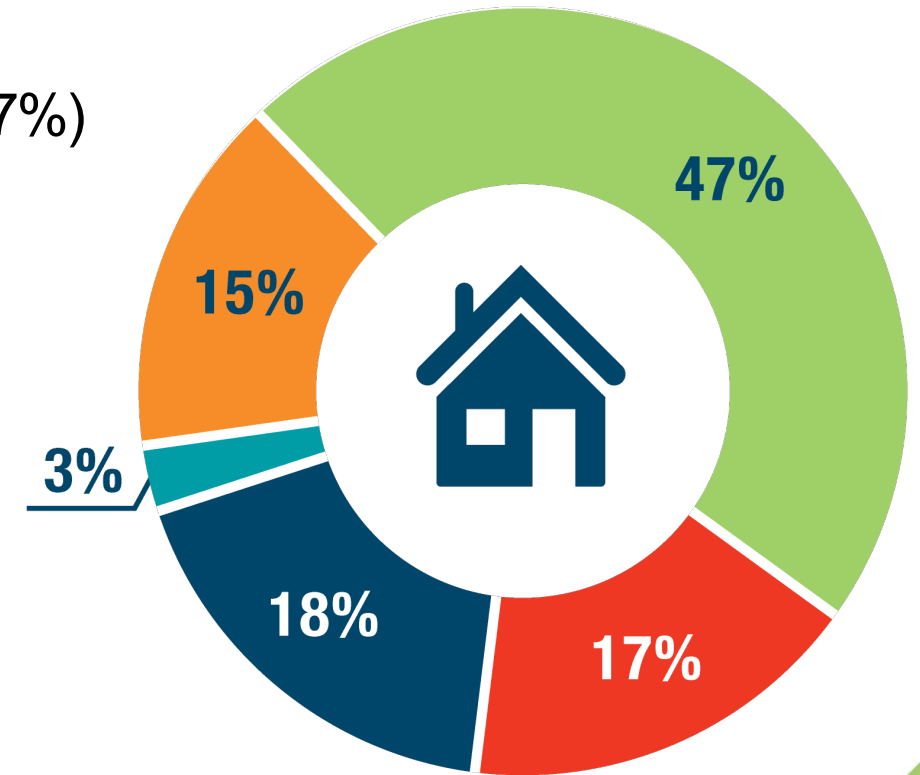
- Cost of the additional housing DC exemptions is between \$10-\$15 million per year
- Niagara Region will have less money to fund growth-related housing developments due to the removal of 'Housing' as an eligible DC service (average of \$6 million per year loss of DCs to Niagara Region)

## PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

# Cumulative Investment in Affordable Housing (2019-2023)

**Capital and Operating total is \$557 million**

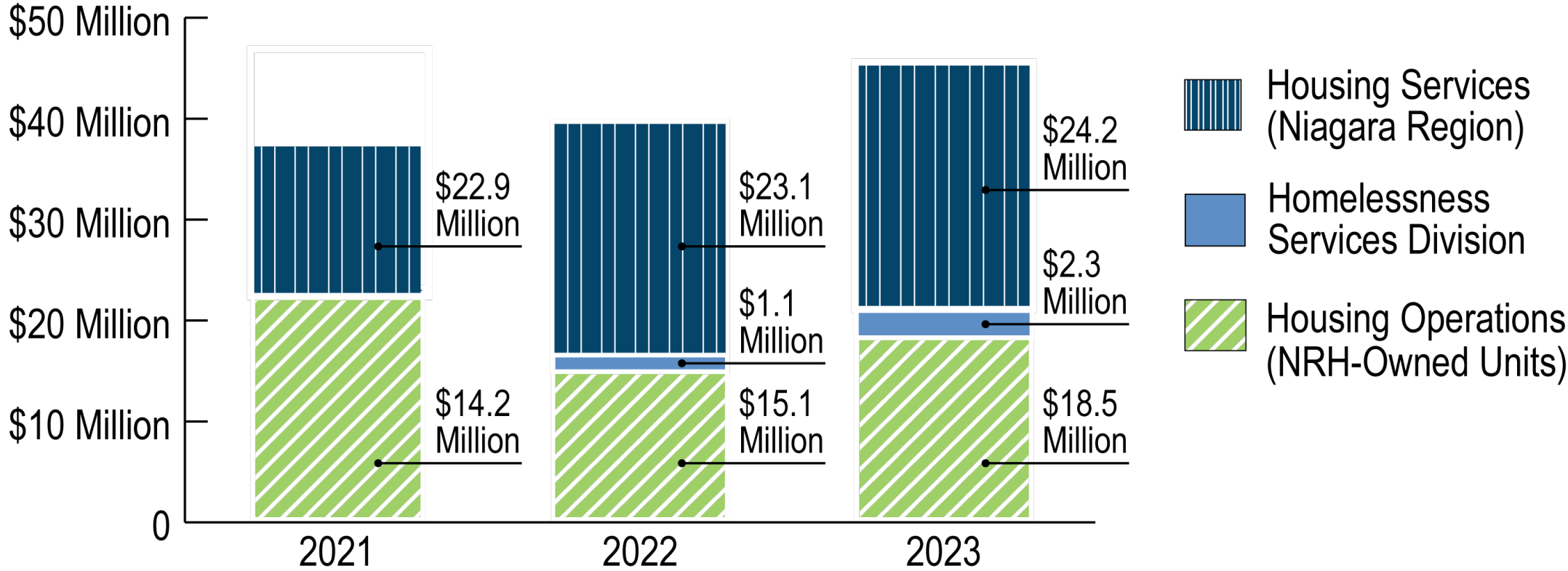
- **Regional - Levy/Reserves/Debt: \$260.8 million (47%)**
- **Provincial Grants: \$96.9 million (17%)**
- **Federal Grants: \$97.5 million (18%)**
- **Development Charge: \$18.5 million (3%)**
- **Other (Tenant etc.): \$83.7 million (15%)**



#HereForYouNiagara

# PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

## Annual Investment in Housing and Homelessness (2021-2023)



## PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

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### Summary of Responsibilities and Best Practice

- Coordinate between housing, land use, and infrastructure planning
- Identify affordable housing targets, land use tools to provide affordable housing
- Promote an appropriate supply and mix of housing
- Partner with private non-profit and cooperative housing providers
- Work with private sector on a mix of housing options
- Make necessary financial investments to maintain existing rental housing stock
- Connect with relevant systems (health, corrections)



## PART 2: What is Niagara Region's Role?

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### Summary of Responsibilities and Best Practice (continued)

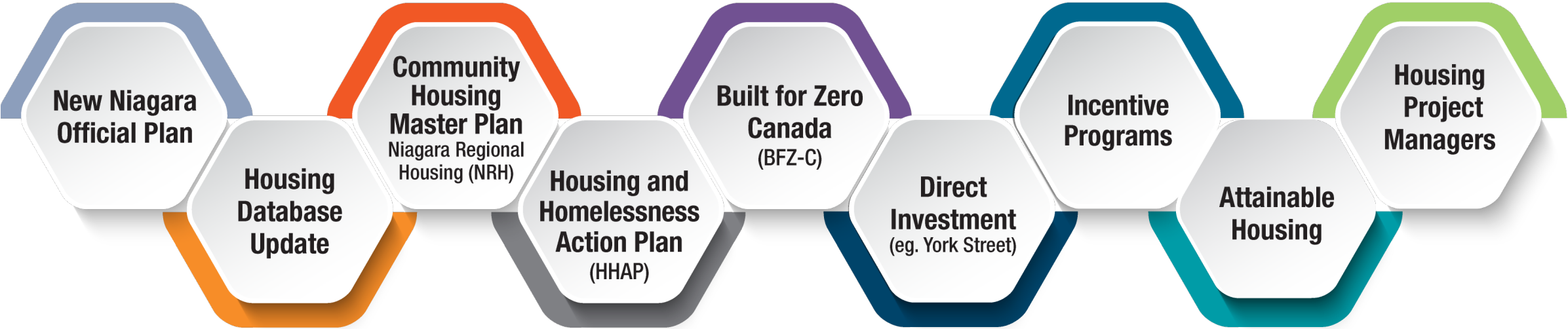
- Leverage the Partnership Housing Program to facilitate incremental growth in affordable units
- Work with LAMs to effectively communicate DC by-law grants and exemptions
- Provide sustainable budgets for capital and operating costs to meet service manager requirements for Community Housing
- Pursue sustainable funding to replace \$6 million in annual DC funding that's no longer available due to Bill 23 service changes

# PART 3

## Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

# PART 3: Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

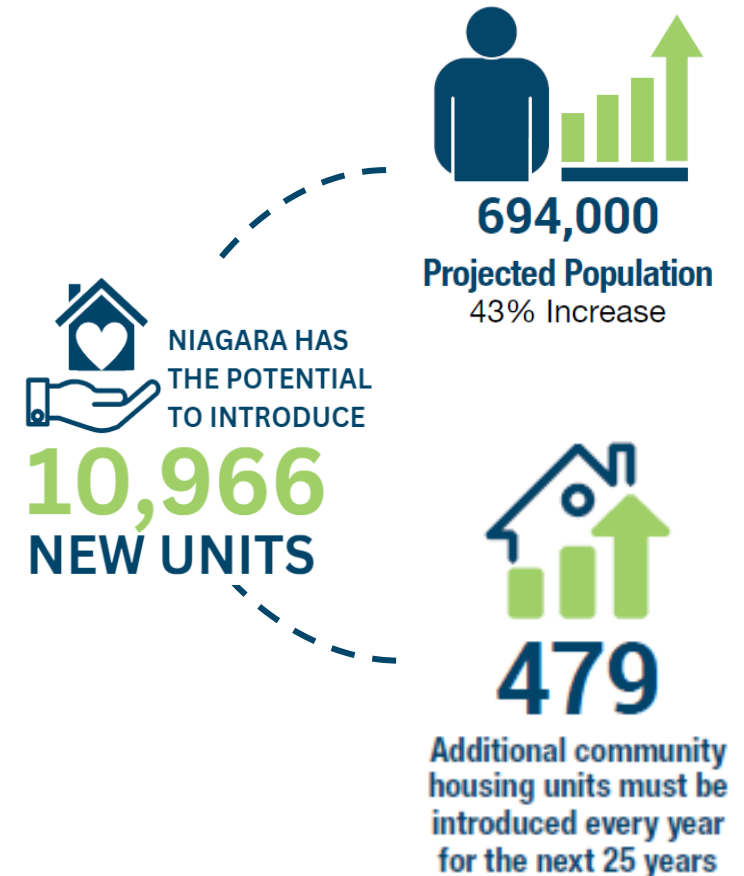
## Niagara's Interconnected Strategies



# PART 3: Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

## Consolidated Housing Master Plan, 2022 (CHMP)

- Includes a comprehensive inventory of NRH sites, private non-profit and cooperative (PNPC) sites, and prospective municipal sites
- Guides new community housing units to 2045
- Indicates existing sites have land capacity to meet demand and eliminate stock deficit
- Provides recommendations and next steps towards implementation



## PART 3: Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

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### It is time for action and we can't do it alone.

- Co-investment to meet housing need
- Partnering and collaborating with PNPCs, private developers, and community housing agencies
- Close working relationships with local municipalities
- Advocacy with Provincial and Federal governments



## PART 3: Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

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### Attainable Housing Work

- Complement numerous initiatives and activities by NRH specifically, as well as Community Services
- Provide strategic and organizational coordination
- Create Housing-as-a-Priority lens for Niagara Region land and operational considerations
- Undertake a comprehensive student housing strategy to unlock existing housing stock
  - Students and aging-in-place within neighbourhoods.
- Engage large employers on an employment-focused housing strategy

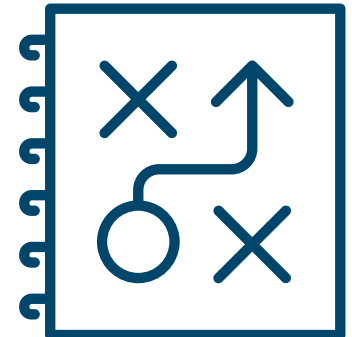


# PART 3: Niagara Region's Strategies to Address the Housing Crisis

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## Housing-as-a-Priority

- Facilitate view of Regional land / assets under a strategic Housing-as-a-Priority lens to unlock more opportunities
- Enable all types of housing options (RGI, Affordable, Attainable)
- Create a Land Optimization Framework to provide guidance for decision-making around land assets owned by Niagara Region (acquisition or disposition)
- Provide details on the framework and criteria for Council consideration Q4 2023



# PART 4

## Activities to Support the Strategy



## PART 4: Activities to Support the Strategy

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# Maintaining Existing Community Housing Stock



Niagara Regional Housing

**3,072**

Niagara Regional  
Housing Owned Units



**3,224**

Housing Provider Units

**51** Non-Profit and  
Cooperative Housing  
Programs



**1,800**

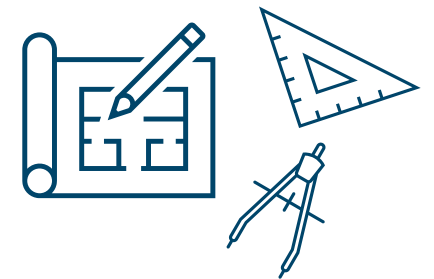
Rent Supplement Units  
(as of Q4 2022)

## PART 4: Activities to Support the Strategy

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### CHMP: Current Initiatives

- CHMP Sub-Working Group
- Affordable Housing Steering Committee
- HHAP Housing Affordability Innovation Working Group
- Prioritization of NRH (re)development sites
- Information Session and Expression of Interest with PNPCs
- Supporting with innovative design and construction
- Housing Project Managers to support community projects



# PART 4: Activities to Support the Strategy

## 2023-24 Housing Projects to Address Pressing Need

### York Street (Welland)



- Completed (July 2023)
- 4-storey apartment.
  - 43 affordable rental units.

### Ontario Street (Linhaven, St. Catharines)



- Preliminary Concept
- Potential for 440 net new residential units (approx. 25% affordable units and 75% market and/or attainable units).

### Chestnut Street (Port Cares, Port Colborne)



- Under Construction
- 5-storey apartment.
  - 41 affordable rental units
  - 32 units for seniors
  - 9 units for single-parent, female-led households)

### High Street (Lions Douglas, Fort Erie)



- Preliminary Concept
- 8-storey apartment.
  - 62 affordable units.
  - Tenants to be seniors on centralized waitlist.

## PART 4: Activities to Support the Strategy

# 2023-24 Housing Projects to Address Pressing Need

### Geneva Street (St. Catharines)



#### Preliminary Concept

- 36 bridge housing units.
- 12-14 supportive housing units.
- 36 affordable rental units.
- Additional market units.

### Crescent Road (Fort Erie)



#### Under Construction

- 3-storey apartment building.
- 18 affordable units.

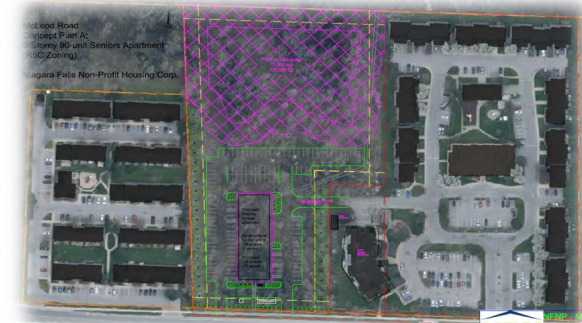
### Haney Street (Port Colborne)



#### Site Preparation

- Intensification of existing development for 27 affordable units (22 net new).
- Site work is ongoing to file for Record of Site Condition.

### McLeod Road (Niagara Falls)



#### Preliminary Concept

- 6-storey apartment.
- 90 affordable units.
- Tenants to be seniors on centralized waitlist.

## PART 4: Activities to Support the Strategy

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Key Initiatives for 2023	Timing
Budget Planning Report (CSD 38-2023)	July 27, 2023
Update on the CHMP (COM 32-2023)	Today
Attainable Housing Workplan (PDS 27-2023)	Today
Housing-as-a-Priority Report	Q4 (2023)
Available Regional Lands Report(s)	Q4 (2023)
Information Session with PNPCs and Expression of Interest	Q4 (2023)
Budget Levy Report	Q4 (2023)