

2017
**Strategic
Business Plan**



**Approved by the Board of Directors
February 2017**

The Way Home

Housing is an essential part of the capital region's ability to support vulnerable persons, and attract and retain a strong workforce to support our economy and labour needs.

Access to housing is fundamental to an individual and family's quality of life and well-being, with impacts going beyond basic accommodation and shelter needs.

Capital Region Housing (CRH) manages 5,100 units, contained in 800 buildings in 120 locations in the region. Our current mandate is to manage housing and provide housing assistance to households in core housing need¹ in the Edmonton area.

Our units provide homes to individuals and families across the spectrum of housing affordability, from those who can only afford to contribute a monthly maximum of \$120 towards their rental costs, to those who have enough income to pay up to 90% of the market rate for their accommodations.

Our objective is that, over time, with the appropriate supports, the individuals and families we serve will leave our housing for true market rent or home ownership.

Additionally, we provide rental subsidies to over 3,000 households in privately owned rental properties. We currently serve over 25,000 Albertans, including 10,000 children in the Edmonton area.

Ensuring everyone can live in a safe, secure, affordable home in the Capital Region is a responsibility shared between Capital Region Housing, other public housing agencies, all levels of government, social service providers, not-for-profit organizations and our citizens.

Those requiring our housing supports have diverse needs – including seniors, persons with disabilities, those affected by mental health and addictions, and families of moderate or low income.

These diverse needs compel Capital Region Housing to provide an integrated approach to service delivery beyond a traditional landlord's role, and execute effective problem identification, elaborate case management, and 'wrap around' service delivery to address the often complex solutions needed to help our clientele.

¹ A household is in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three housing standards.

- Adequate housing is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income.
- Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up or resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard requirements.

Our Focus

Vision

Building quality homes and inclusive communities with engaged people.

Mission

We improve the well-being of children and families in our communities through a continuum of quality housing options, supports, and partnerships.

Values

- ❖ Dedication to every client success
- ❖ Integrity and responsibility in all relationships
- ❖ Innovation achieved through collaboration in our organization and in the community

Our Principles

Sustainability

We will build an organization that values and promotes financial, social and environmental sustainability.

Value Proposition

We will focus on operational excellence and customer service, creating an environment where clients can achieve their highest independence.

Communications and Community Engagement

We will ensure all our partners – tenants, staff, service providers, and governments – are fully aware and engaged in our success.

Innovation

We will focus on innovation and collaboration to deliver sustainable housing models.

Our Values

Put People First - by treating everyone with empathy, understanding, respect, fairness and appreciating diversity, and by connecting with customers and stakeholders as a primary source for organizational learning and improvement.

Focus on Solutions - by using facts, data and the best information; acting with passion and a positive attitude towards our work; using mistakes as learning opportunities, and being flexible and adaptable to embrace change and continuous improvement.

Work Collaboratively and Transparently - by fostering a safe space to communicate openly and honestly so everyone has the self-confidence and courage to be completely candid; and by acting with conviction and personal humility with the goal of co-operation and consistency.

Invest – by effectively utilizing, revitalizing and developing all of our assets for the greatest possible growth and success of our employees, customers and the organization.

Do What's Right – by acting with integrity, behaving responsibly, operating within the parameters of all applicable legislation and regulation, being good stewards of public dollars, and holding each other accountable to live these values.

Current Context

Alberta's economy continues to present challenges for many households. There is little new activity in the oil and gas sector resulting in significant job losses. Those job losses are now also being felt in other sectors, and while Edmonton had been slightly insulated from the negative growth effect at the beginning of the economic downturn, this changed in 2016. Many individuals and families are now exhausting their Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, resulting in increased financial pressures, especially relating to housing affordability.

The new economic reality of increased job losses and little economic growth has put increased pressure on the services provided by CRH. In addition to the new average of 300 applications per month, close to 5,000 people a month attend CRH's office, half of whom are applicants. A trend of tenants asking for rent adjustments due to loss of income has continued. The waitlist for community housing and subsidies continues to increase: there are now over 4,700 households representing 18,000 people on the list.

The changing population in Edmonton is reflected in the diverse clientele served by CRH. Indigenous and immigrant/refugee populations live in poverty in the city at greater rates than other groups. Indigenous children live in poverty at twice the rate of Edmonton children overall (43.7% versus 18.8%).

Newcomers to Canada and Edmonton also experience higher levels of poverty where 28.6% of people of African origin and 21.2% of Middle Eastern origin are considered to be living in poverty. A significant number of highly educated newcomers work in lower paying jobs as their foreign qualifications are not recognized.

A living wage in Edmonton has been estimated at between \$16.14 and \$17.29 per hour depending on family size. Edmonton's Poverty Profile reports almost 20% of Edmontonians earn less than \$15 per hour. The impact of the minimum wage increase to \$12.20 per hour effective October 1, 2016 has yet to be determined, particularly as it relates to households on CRH's waiting list and in CRH housing.

However, affordable housing has become a key priority for all levels of government. The federal government is working towards a National Housing Strategy and the Alberta government is preparing the Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy and reviewing the regulatory framework under which CRH operates. At a municipal level, the City of Edmonton is moving forward with the strategies outlined in the End Poverty Road Map, where affordable housing is recognized as a game changer.

The Critical Path

CRH has developed this Strategic Business Plan to outline the Goals and Tactical Activities that make up the organization's critical path for 2017.

Goal 1: Adopt a customer focused model of delivery and engagement

Tactical Activities

- 1.1 Implement a Customer Focus Policy for the organization.
- 1.2 Map CRH's customer experience journey to identify all touchpoints between customers and CRH.
- 1.3 Develop and implement a well-being measurement tool for CRH customers.
- 1.4 Establish an organizational discipline for planning and reporting, enabling the development of measures to better inform service for customers.
- 1.5 Establish a tenant relations department and tenant engagement strategy.
- 1.6 Establish an auditing protocol to ensure accuracy of rent amounts.

Goal 2: Establish a new service delivery model for Capital Region Housing

Tactical Activities

- 2.1 Explore new financial models to leverage existing assets.
- 2.2 Create a client satisfaction evaluation matrix for asset management related projects.
- 2.3 Develop online processes for customer applications.
- 2.4 Transition to a paperless environment for customer files.
- 2.5 Establish a risk management strategy.
- 2.6 Implement values matrix.
- 2.7 Continue implementation of the renewed protocols for site managers.

Goal 3: Continue to meet the demand for housing

Tactical Activities

- 3.1 Establish partnerships to support the building of new affordable housing units.
- 3.2 Build project management capacity to deliver more housing and maintenance projects.
- 3.3 Finalize the Community Housing Revitalization Strategy.
- 3.4 Establish a new approach to dealing with vacancies and suite turnovers.
- 3.5 Optimize housing availability in near market buildings.

Goal 4: Become a leader in the Housing Sector

Tactical Activities

- 4.1 Establish a policy network and plan for a housing policy focused conference.
- 4.2 Deliver 10 Train the Trainer sessions and support the delivery of RentSmart in Alberta.
- 4.3 Revise and relaunch the Home Program and associated down payment assistance program
- 4.4 Continue service agreements with other housing providers.

Capital Region Housing

2017 Strategic Business Plan

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