

Northumberland County Housing Corporation

2024 Business Plan

The strategic priorities of the Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) are guided by the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and align to the corporate vision, mission, and values. The direction of the NCHC continues to evolve and grow to meet the needs in the community and serve Northumberland County's strategic priorities and plans.

The NCHC regularly assesses its progress in implementing the strategic priorities outlined in the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The General Manager provides quarterly updates to the Board on Strategic Plan progress, on an annual basis the NCHC releases an Annual Report that is shared with County Council as shareholder, and the broader community. The annual business plan is completed as part of the annual budget process and will establish implementation objectives for the upcoming budget cycle. Over 2024-2026, the NCHC will strive to make progress in the following areas:

Improve Tenant Experience

Objective 1.1. Tenancies are well management and vulnerable tenants have successful tenancies

- Continue developing relationships and partnerships with community organizations to support people at risk of homelessness to remain housed.
- Foster partnerships with community agencies and collaborate with organizations in the community that can extend support services to NCHC.

Objective 1.2. Promote equity, diversity and inclusions and raise awareness to inform and enhance services

- Develop training plan to support the NCHC Board of Directors and key staff to support decision making and delivery of programming grounded in equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Consider the engagement of a consultant in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion to support the work being undertaken in this area.
- Work toward the creation of a strategic plan to support tenant inclusion principles based on the NCHC value of Inclusivity and Accessibility, with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Objective 1.3. Tenants are engaged and receive timely and proactive communications

- Finalize standard operating procedure for the display of information on Electronic Messaging Boards.

- Seek tenant feedback in relation to the effectiveness, communications and value of content provided through Electronic Messaging Boards.
- Develop a tenant communications protocol establishing clear standards for proactive communications on matters that impact tenants that will apply across the Corporation.
- Implement a Tenant Engagement Survey or Tenant Quality of Service every three years, including establishing ongoing tenant feedback tactics to be continuously be kept informed.

Objective 1.4. Promote tenant engagement and participation activities

- Develop and implement a fulsome tenant relation program schedule across all communities.
- Seek tenant feedback on the type of tenant relations activities that are needed through informal feedback from programming participants.
- Work with interested community agencies and County departments to develop proactive community programming onsite at NCHC properties, this may include seeking external funding sources.
- Consider opportunities to engage with local systems to support aging-in-place for senior tenants.

Objective 1.5. Provide quality housing and customer service

- Complete the development of service level standards for customer service, including in areas such as response times, tenant relations, after hours services, case notes/documentation, etc.
- Support tenants through technological changes to services, including banking options and automated laundry systems.

Expand and Grow the NCHC Portfolio

Objective 2.1. Revitalization, renewal and implementation of new development

- Using the NCHC Asset Management Plan, develop a long-term plan for the regeneration of the assets which includes assessing the existing portfolio and identifying new candidates with revitalization potential, and identifying different strategies to support portfolio growth through capital acquisition and partnerships.
- Complete the Construction Standards for the construction of new units to support County staff in implementing the growth and redevelopment of the NCHC. (i.e. general direction and flexible standards relating to accessibility and environmental efficiencies, built form, materials and finishes)

- Informed by the Affordable Housing Strategy, set a direction for balancing efficiencies for building with the needs of the various communities (i.e, targeted demographic group, unit size, income mix, high density or low -density housing, location).
- Continue to execute the construction of Elgin Park Redevelopment (i.e, preconstruction work, re-zoning requirements, seeking financing options, tenant relations, construction)
- Consider establishing growth targets for the NCHC.

Objective 2.2. Leverage funding, financing and partnership opportunities to provide more homes

- Continue development work of 473 Ontario Street with project partners, including pre-construction work through design activities.
- Continue working with the County and member municipalities to identify future sites for NCHC growth across the County.
- Work toward identifying an additional site to develop a shovel-ready, funding-ready project for NCHC growth.
- Support provincial advocacy efforts to increase understanding of the local housing corporation model and the important role we play in our local communities.

Objective 2.3. Explore tools and mechanisms that will position NCHC to grow

- With Northumberland County Finance Department initiate the creation of a capital reserve strategy, as according to the County's corporate reserve policy to support NCHC new developments.

Extend and Improve the Useful Life of NCHC Assets

Objective 3.1. Development of a Strategic Asset Management Plan

- Mobilize the use of the Asset Planner software and data to update, track and monitor the state of capital repair of the assets and to assist in informing the Board and decision-making prioritization.
- Develop strategic maintenance priorities informed by Building Condition Audits and capital plan.
- Develop a plan to address accessibility standards as per regulatory compliance.
- Working with Northumberland County, develop a capital reserve strategy for the ongoing and long-term capital needs of the NCHC stock informed by capital plans.

- With the support of Northumberland County, complete Building Condition Assessments, Capital Reserve Replacement Forecasts, elevator audits, energy audits and accessibility audits every five years. (2026)
- Meet annual capital targets/priorities as outlined in the 10 Year Capital Plan to maintain and sustain the NCHC stock and aligned with the Building Condition Audit data.

Objective 3.2. Improve housing conditions to support health and wellbeing

- Begin implementing the use of AssetPlanner technology to update, track and monitor the state of capital repair.
- Continue to implement the annual capital plan as outlined in the 10-year capital plan and BCA data.
- Continue implementing the policy for Unit Turnover to ensure ongoing condition of unit renovations.

Objective 3.3. Improve standard and delivery of maintenance services

- Completion of a full Standard Operating Procedure Manual for Facilities Management.
- Work with Facilities Management to integrate recording of NCHC work orders and time tracking in the CityWorks system, to track and report on the time and costs spent; and to support the identification of proactive preventive maintenance programs (i.e., identify systems that may be failing).
- Establish maintenance and repair standards to improve tenant experience and the ability for NCHC to meet their needs.
- Establish reporting processes to demonstrate budget savings/cost reductions as a result of the 2021 Facilities Department request for additional staff.
- Provide cross-departmental training to Facilities and Housing teams to support responses on site, including specific training for Facilities staff on issues relating to housing matters and supports required by tenants.

Strengthen Governance

Objective 4.1. Demonstrate to the County and public what we are doing to manage the NCHC and its operating

- Begin working with the County's Communication department to develop a strategy for reporting and communicating progress and achievements within the strategic plan.
- Consider the creation of a townhall approach with stakeholders, member municipalities and tenants to explain the role of the NCHC and its Strategic Plan.

Objective 4.2. Strengthen the role of the Board to support effective governance

- Adopt a protocol for decision making between the Board, Registered Officer and County staff (divisions).
- Develop a corporate business intelligence framework by starting a process for reporting on the performance of NCHC which includes establishing a set of business indicators/performance measures.

Objective 4.3. Maintain highest corporate management practices to ensure accountability and transparency

- Provide Board of Directors education and training on the Code of Conduct, including declaring conflicts of interests.
- Initiate a compliance review for the NCHC to requirements outlined in the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

Objective 4.4. Ensure effective board succession planning

- Continue the development of a Board succession plan to ensure continuity, diversity and the skills-based board is maintained.

Objective 4.5. Maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with our shareholder in all strategic, operational and financial areas

- Renew the Purchased Services Agreement with Northumberland County (2024).
- Complete an operational review with the County every three to five years and use the results to improve NCHC performance.

Build and Strengthen the NCHC Profile

Objective 5.1. Implement a framework for organizational communications

- Begin working toward an increased presence on the County website and consider if a separate landing page is required.
- Begin working on a protocol for public relations, identifying communication approaches and a social media protocol for responding to inquiries relating to the NCHC.

Objective 5.2. Action our brand mission, vision and values through community engagement

- Work toward implementing strong tenant communication policies and processes to respond to tenant complaints and concerns.

- Seek out opportunities for Board members and key staff members to model the NCHC brand through community action.
- Ensure progress on construction projects is communicated to the public and community.
- Actively seek partnership opportunities with aligned community agencies in the implementation of the strategic plan, annual business plan activities and other activities.

5.3 Establish our brand voice, advocating for housing priorities and strengthening connections with tenants

- Assess ways the electronic messaging boards can be used to build the NCHC profile. (i.e., share Tenant engagement survey results, reporting on progress)
- Increase opportunities for the NCHC to share its story, progresses and challenges faced in achieving strategic goals. Consider advocacy opportunities to address barriers.
- Become a communication leader in housing trends, challenges, and best practices.