2018
Annual Housing Update
Comprehensive Housing Strategy Overview

The CHS was completed and approved in 2013. The CHS outlines the City’s role in housing, five major housing issues, five goals to address those issues and 35 strategies to positively impact the state of housing in Regina. The CHS can be viewed at Regina.ca.

Why create the Strategy?
The Strategy enables the City to:
• Define and communicate the City’s role in housing.
• Better align policies, programs and assets with current and future housing needs.
• Define the best areas and methods to stimulate the housing market, within the City’s role.

Key Strategy Implementation Actions
Since approval of the CHS, the City has seen progress to address housing issues. Increased development of affordable and market rental housing, coupled with a slowdown in population growth have helped reduce the housing supply issues that existed when the CHS was approved; however, affordable housing availability and options remain an issue especially for the most vulnerable households.

Strategy Implementation
Following the release of the CHS, a Housing Strategy Implementation Plan (HSIP) was approved by City Council in June of 2013. The Implementation Plan includes:
• Steps for implementation
• City divisions affected or involved
• Anticipated outcomes
• Monitoring, reporting and evaluation techniques
The housing situation in Regina has improved since 2013 when the Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) was first completed. Rental vacancy rates have risen and housing prices (ownership) have levelled after substantial increases between 2006 and 2013. Similarly, rental rates (cost to rent an apartment) have stagnated since the mid-2000s when increases were upwards of ten per cent annually in some years.

The economic slowdown from falling commodity prices, combined with a residential construction boom from previous years, led Regina's housing market to soften in 2018. The number of home sales in the city were down by eight per cent in 2018 compared to a year earlier and the lowest number of sales in over a decade. The average sales price was $303,357 for homes in the city, a drop from the 2017 average price of $316,909.

Despite a slowdown in the market place, development of affordable units continues but at a slower pace than previous years. As of the end of 2018, approximately 120 affordable ownership units that are eligible for capital down payment grants remain available in the market for purchase. Affordable rental units on the other hand, remain relatively stable with the number of capital grants committed for rental units in 2018 exceeding affordable ownership for the first time since the completion of the CHS in 2013.

To date, implementation has been ongoing for most strategies of the CHS with highlights including:

- **Completion of Laneway Suites.** Three pilot projects were initiated to support the creation of laneway suites as a new form of secondary suites in Regina. The first laneway suites were piloted in select areas within Greens on Gardiner and Harbour Landing. The Laneway and Garden Suite Guidelines for established neighbourhoods and pilot project for six infill laneway and garden suites were approved by Council January 2016. One of the six infill units was completed in 2017 and an additional infill laneway suite was near completion by the end of 2018 (Strategy 3, 25).

- **Housing Incentive Program (HIP).** The City provides capital grant and tax exemption incentives through the HIP to stimulate new affordable rental and ownership units that address current housing needs. Minor revisions were made to HIP in 2017 to better align criteria with policy objectives and came into effect January 1st, 2018. Highlighted changes included refining the definition of a non-profit corporation, prioritizing funding for affordable rental development, refining the definition of an Assisted Care Rental Unit, and updating the eligibility criteria for two-unit rental developments (Strategy 1).

- **Zone Forward.** Zone Forward continued its work on developing a new zoning bylaw in 2018. Several changes to zoning regulations were proposed within the draft bylaw including, the removal of regulatory barriers associated with secondary suites, lower minimum requirements for small lot developments, provisions for relaxation of parking requirements in certain considerations as well as higher site coverage permitted for multi-unit buildings in medium and high density zones (Strategy 3, 5, 15, 16).

- **Vacancy Rate Target.** The CHS established a three per cent rental vacancy rate target by 2017. This target was achieved by fall of 2014. The rental vacancy rate increased to 7.7 per cent in October of 2018 with 565 new rental unit starts in 2018 (Strategy 10, 17).

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1. Source: Association of Regina Realtors, Annual Historical Statistics - MLS Residential Total – Regina and Region
Housing data tracking and reporting. Tracking, recording and evaluating the housing situation through data from Census, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA), City building permits and Regina Realtors Association is ongoing to inform housing programs and incentives. The most recent federal census survey was completed in 2016 with data releases in 2017 and 2018. The most up-to-date housing data is included later in this document (Strategies 10, 31 and 34).

Housing Standards Enforcement Team (HSET). The HSET was relaunched with dedicated resources from the core team members. The mandate for the team was revised to focus on improving unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions by conducting comprehensive investigations and inspections of sites where multiple aspects of health and safety have been compromised. HSET leverages the expertise and accompany legislation of various agencies to ensure compromised sites are enforced to minimum health and safety standards. A dedicated coordinator was appointed to be the primary point of contact and to communicate with stakeholders as required. 77 new cases were opened resulting in 75 Orders to Comply issued, 10 dwellings declared as unfit for occupancy, with 1 dwelling demolished. The HSET focuses on working with the property owner(s) to achieve compliance (Strategy 13).

Partnerships. There is on-going communication with the Federal and Provincial governments, Indigenous and non-profit groups, property owners, developers and landlords to support access to affordable home initiatives and homelessness. A member of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) sits on the Mayor’s Housing Commission (MHC) (Strategy 7, 9, 21).

Homelessness. In-kind support for homelessness is provided by the City as a member of City Administration sits on the Regina Homelessness Community Advisory Board (RHCAB). In 2018, $1.75 million in federal funding was committed to organizations working on homelessness in the community including $750,000 for Housing First. At a municipal level, the City also provided $60,000 towards a Plan to End Homelessness for Regina, which was initiated in early of 2018 (Strategy 28).

National Housing Strategy. The NHS was released in November of 2017 with a focus on the renovation of existing affordable housing units and funding for the development of new affordable units. A summary of the National Housing Strategy was provided to members of the Mayor’s Housing Commission in February and November 2018 (Strategy 9, 12).

Community Investment Grants Program. There is continued support for housing and homelessness initiatives through the City’s Community Investment Grants Program. In 2018, $386,337 was allocated to organizations involved with housing and homelessness including Mobile Crisis Services Inc., Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc. and Regina Transitional Homes Inc. among many others (Strategy 27).

Mayor’s Housing Commission (MHC). The MHC continues to offer a forum for housing discussion and guidance for the implementation of the CHS. In 2018, a total of three MHC meetings were held to consider a variety of housing related research and policy topics such as the National Housing Strategy, homelessness and rental housing vacancy rates (Strategy 35).
The following issues continue to create housing challenges in Regina.

**Affordable Housing Needs** - Despite significant gains, there is still work to be done in order to meet the goals of the CHS with regards to affordable housing. The need for more affordable units is evidenced by the percentage of Regina households who struggle to find affordable housing as reported in the 2016 Census data. Unaffordable housing – defined as spending more than 30 per cent of pre-tax income for housing – impacts 23 per cent of Regina households. Further, unaffordable housing impacts renters to a far greater extent than owners. In the 2016 Census, it was reported that 46.1 per cent of all renters in the City lived in unaffordable housing, up from 44.4 per cent in 2011, whereas only 12 per cent of owner households reported spending greater than 30 per cent on housing.

In 2018, capital funding from the City of $1.19 million was committed for 80 new units through the HIP, of which 50 were affordable rental units. This is an improvement over previous years when uptake of affordable home ownership units often eclipsed the development of affordable rental units. Revisions to the HIP were made in 2017 to reduce the number of affordable ownership units funded by the City for a single developer to 20 units per year. The rationale for this policy decision was the fact that ownership units funded in 2015–2016 still have units available that have not been sold to eligible households, and the current housing market where more entry-level homes are available in the new and resale market than during tighter housing markets in previous years. As of the end of 2018, just over 120 units remain available under the capital grant program for homeownership.

A comprehensive review of the Housing Incentives Policy (HIP) will be undertaken in 2019 as an initiative to further improve the HIP (Strategy 1).
Complete Communities – There is still a continued need for affordable residential development in proximity to services and amenities to create complete communities. As observed in 2018, 75 per cent of all units applying through the HIP were created in new developing areas of the city. Similarly, most new affordable units built since 2016 were approved in greenfield areas of the city owing to the number of ownership units funded during this time. For affordable rental units, a larger proportion were approved in existing areas of the city between 2012 and 2018 with 254 affordable rental units approved in Area 2 (existing, core areas) compared to 99 affordable rental units in Area 3. There were no affordable rental developments funded in Area 1 (City Centre) during this time period.

Housing Repair – As per 2016 Census data, just over seven per cent of housing was reported in need of major repairs. This is down from 2011 data (9.1 per cent) but points to a continued need to preserve and repair existing housing stock. Older units in need of repair are often in established neighbourhoods and located close to services and transit. They also often offer below market rental rates and are less expensive to renovate on a per unit basis than the construction of new units. With increasing rental vacancy rates, there is a risk of older rental stock falling further into disrepair (Strategies 12 and 13).

Increase in Primary and Secondary Rental Vacancy Rates – Vacancy rates for the primary rental market rose to 7.7 per cent in 2018, up 0.7 per cent from the previous year. Vacant rates of secondary rental condominiums saw a much greater leap from 0.4 per cent in 2017 to 9.6 per cent in 2018 as reported in the 2018 CMHC Rental Market Report. Although increase in both primary and secondary rental units provide more diversity or choice for a variety of household sizes, the trend also reflects an oversupply of available units in the rental market. Based on rental completion dates, rental units prior to the 1960s observed a slight decrease in rental costs. However, newer rental units continue to enter the market at higher rental rates resulting in an overall increase of average rental prices in the city (Strategy 10).
Housing Incentives Policy – Project Highlights

The following projects were completed or received funding commitments in 2018.

**Souls Harbour Mission**

**1610 Angus Street**

Located in North Central, the Samaritan Project is a multi-purpose facility that includes a day care, 17 affordable rental units, a clothing store as well as a soup kitchen that converts to an overnight shelter with 23 beds for the use of hard-to-house males in the city. Design of the building incorporated passive design, engineering and construction, maximizing the facilities functionality and cost recovery.

**Avana’s George Street Project**

**3000-3088 George Street**

A 45-unit development currently underway, consisting of ten four-plexes and one five-plex dedicated to affordable rental housing for a diverse groups of households.

**Gabriel Housing**

**305 Garnet Street**

Capital grants were approved for two single family units containing four-bedrooms and including a secondary suite. The units are geared towards supporting hard to house families at a below market rental price.

**Silver Sage Housing**

**1325 Forget Avenue/ 5025 & 5029 7th Avenue**

First Nation-owned affordable housing project made up of three duplexes with each unit featuring three bedrooms. The proposed development will provide permanent housing for clients graduating from Silver Sage’s transitional housing.
Housing Data Update

Housing Starts (Rental vs. Ownership)
Rental construction starts in the CMA in 2018 increased significantly, making up 50 per cent of total starts as compared to only 39 per cent in 2017. As a result, the split of tenure for housing starts in 2018 were balanced between rental and ownership units with ownership houses and condominium starts making up the remaining 50 per cent. Based on 2016 Census data, 30 per cent of households in the city rent, nearly unchanged with 2011 Census data reported at 31 per cent. During this time, the number of ownership households (70 per cent of all households) have increased by nearly 17 per cent, from 55,120 private households in 2011 to 66,380 private households in 2016.

A total of 565 rental unit starts were reported in 2018. Apartment units dominated housing starts with 500 units, accounting for 88 percent of rental starts in the city, followed by row housing. The majority of ownership starts were single-detached dwellings with 522 units, while condominium starts reflected a preference for row housing with 41 units.

Figure 1: Regina Ownership, Rental & Condo Housing Starts – 2008-2018

Rental Starts & Vacancy Rates
Increased rental housing starts over the years have improved the availability of rental housing significantly. The vacancy rate for market rental apartment units increased to 7.7 per cent in the fall of 2018, up from 7.0 per cent in fall of 2017. The continued rise of vacancy rates in 2018 and a reduction in the number of rental starts by nearly 25 per cent compared to 2017 signals an oversaturation of market rental units in the Regina.

Figure 2: Rental Starts & Vacancy Rates – 2008 – 2018.

Source: CMHC Market Analysis Centre, Historical Starts by Intended Market.

Source: CMHC Market Analysis Centre, Historical Starts by Bedroom Type by Zone.
Rental and Ownership Housing Costs

In 2018, the average house price was $303,357, down from $316,909 in 2017, a decrease of four per cent. The overall decrease in home prices is a result of a softening of the housing market due to economic conditions as well as the introduction of new mortgage rules that came into effect in January 2018. Meanwhile, the average rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment continues to rise slightly at $1,135 per month in 2018, up from $1,116 in 2017, an increase of 2 per cent. The overall average monthly rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment and house price in Regina over the past 10 years were $1,108 and $294,905 respectively.

Figure 3: Average Rental Price vs. Average Home Price – 2008 – 2018.

Source: Association of Regina Realtors, Annual Historical Statistics - MLS Residential Total – Regina and Region; CMHC Market Analysis Centre, Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Zone – Regina

Benchmark Residential Price by City

Based on the MLS® Home Price Index2 (HPI) Regina home values have increased over time however at a slower rate compared to other cities within the prairie region. Change in the benchmark residential price reflect Regina had the highest decline in home value in 2018 to $267,400 with a decrease of 5.2 per cent from 2017. The downward trend is attributed to an oversupply of housing in the market as well as a lack of demand. The overall benchmark residential price within Canada is $472,280.

Figure 4: Benchmark Residential Price by City, 2017-2018

Source: The Canadian Real Estate Association, Housing Market Stats, National Price Map

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2 The HPI measures residential price trends based on four benchmark home types, with the index set at a base of 100 for January 2005.
City of Regina Housing Incentives

In 2017, the HIP was updated to provide additional support for the development of affordable rental housing and to ensure that capital funding is prioritized for non-profit housing providers that provide affordable housing for the long-term and have a charitable mission to benefit the public at large. Incentives were reduced for affordable home ownership units to focus on greatest housing need.

In 2018, capital grants were committed for nearly $1.2 million in affordable housing developments and since 2013, the City has committed over $11.7 million in capital grant contributions. Capital grants were approved for 80 units in 2018, of which 50 were affordable rental units (63 per cent). This is a significant change from previous years as the number of affordable rental units funded in 2018 is higher than affordable ownership units. Notable as well is that the total committed dollars and units receiving capital grants in 2018 are nearly half of those committed in 2017 ($2.2 million, 151 units). The 67 per cent decrease in affordable housing units seeking capital grants in 2018 is due to amendments to the policy in 2017 to reduce the allotment of capital grants for ownership projects to 20 grants per development. As of the end of 2018, more than 120 pre-existing affordable ownership units are still available in the market from previous years.

The HIP tax exemption program provides tax exemptions for affordable ownership and affordable rental units, secondary suites and market rental and ownership units in identified existing areas of the city. In 2018, the number of rental units receiving a tax exemption decreased 17 per cent to 546 units from 661 units in 2017. This includes exempted units started in previous years. The HIP tax exemption incentives have helped vacancy rates meet and exceed the rental vacancy target established in the CHS of three per cent. With the elimination of tax exemption in newly-developed areas of the city effective 2016, the overall number of units exempted will continue to decline.
Between 2012 and 2015, the distribution of capital grants was relatively equal with infill areas typically seeing slightly more capital grants. Since 2016, there was a drastic shift towards proposals for capital grants for affordable housing located at the edges of the city in greenfield areas. In 2018, the infill-greenfield split for affordable units funded was 25/75, showing a higher level of imbalance than in 2017 when the split was 40/60. Increased development in greenfield areas can be attributed to the emergence of more private developers entering the affordable housing market, an increase in the number of ownership units funded, the challenge of finding land in the city core as well as barriers to infill development.

**Figure 8: Capital Grant Housing Incentive – Infill & Greenfield Split – 2012 - 2018**

Source: City of Regina, Incentive Data, 2012 - 2018.

**Affordability**

Affordability continues to be a major housing issue in the City and is the largest factor contributing to core housing need. In 2016, 23 per cent of all households in the City lived in unaffordable housing. This figure has not changed since 2011. Additionally, unaffordable housing affects renters more so than owners. In 2016, 46.1 per cent of all renters in the city lived in unaffordable housing compared to 12 per cent of all owners in Regina who lived in unaffordable housing, down from 13 per cent in 2011.

**Figure 9: Rate of Unaffordable Housing – 2006, 2011, 2016**


**Figure 10: Rate of Unaffordable Housing by Tenure – 2016**

Core Housing Need

A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and if the household must spend 30 per cent or more of its total before-tax income to access acceptable housing where all three criteria are met (Statistics Canada). The 2016 National Household Survey (Census) shows that 13.3 per cent of households in Regina are in core housing need, up from 12 per cent in 2011 and 9.6 per cent in 2006. Regina’s 2016 core housing rate is similar to the provincial rate, which stands at 13.4 percent, but higher than the national rate, which stands at 12.7 per cent.

Figure 11: Rate of Core Housing Need – 2006, 2011, 2016


Housing Repairs by Tenure

Based on 2016 Census data, the majority of housing stock in the city required regular maintenance (67 per cent), about a quarter required minor repairs (26 per cent) and a small portion required major repairs (7.1 per cent). The overall number of households requiring major repairs decreased from 9.1 per cent in 2011 to 7.1 per cent in 2016. Approximately 69 per cent of ownership units were reported as requiring major repair, while 30 per cent were rental units.

Figure 12: Repairs by Tenure – 2016


Housing Definitions

Unaffordable Housing: Housing that costs more than 30 per cent of before-tax household income.

Inadequate Housing: Housing that requires major repairs, according to residents.

Unsuitable Housing: Housing that does not have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of residents in households, according to National Occupancy Standard requirements.

Source: Statistics Canada, Core housing need, Census of Canada 2016.

^ Based on 2-bedroom average
Population Change by Census Tract

Based on 2016 Census, population growth occurred on the outer areas of the city while some of the inner areas experienced a population loss. The population in new areas such as Harbour Landing and the Greens on Gardiner had the greatest rate of growth, increasing by more than 2,500 people per neighbourhood since 2011. The downtown area, on the other hand, witnessed a decrease in population by 144 persons, a 17 per cent decrease since 2011.

Figure 13: Change in Regina City Population from 2011 to 2016

Household Make-Up

Based on the 2016 Census data, two-person households made up the largest household type in the city at 33 per cent.

Figure 14: Household Make-Up, 2016

Provincial Programs

The Provincial government currently provides several programs delivered through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) in support of rental development and home repair:

- **Rental Development Program (RDP).** City’s HIP capital grants and tax incentives were designed to be stackable with the RDP. The program provides a one-time forgivable loan for capital funding to assist in the development of affordable rental units for low income households. Funding is delivered in accordance with the principles of the National Housing Strategy (NHS) and supports provincial strategies such as the Disability Strategy, Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy.

- **Emergency Home Repairs.** Offers financial assistance of up to $12,000 to help low-income homeowners complete emergency repairs to make their homes safe.

- **Home Repair Program.** For low income homeowners or rental property owners who may receive a forgivable loan of up to $23,000 for modification to be more accessible for a person with a housing-related disability.

- **Shelter Enhancement Program – Renovation.** Provides financial assistance to organizations to repair existing emergency shelters and second-stage housing for victims of family violence so that these projects meet health, safety and security standards.
### List of Comprehensive Housing Strategies

<p>| Strategy 1 | Refine current property tax and capital incentives to target the issue of insufficient supply of rental and affordable housing. |
| Strategy 2 | Leverage the City’s land assets to increase the supply of rental, affordable and special needs housing, promote the diversity of housing, and support the creation of complete neighbourhoods. |
| Strategy 3 | Foster the creation of secondary suites. |
| Strategy 4 | Establish interim innovative affordable housing rezoning policy that allows for consideration of rezoning applications immediately in specific existing residential or mixed use areas. |
| Strategy 5 | Develop policies to support the use of alternative development standards. |
| Strategy 6 | Implement a policy and process to fast-track affordable housing and special needs housing developments through the planning approval process. |
| Strategy 7 | Work with the Regina Regional Opportunities Commission to encourage major new developments/investments to prepare a housing plan. |
| Strategy 8 | Permit density bonusing and transfer of development rights with an aim of increasing the supply of affordable and special needs housing. |
| Strategy 9 | Advocate to federal and provincial governments for additional support for rental, affordable, and special needs housing. |
| Strategy 10 | Monitor changes to the existing rental housing stock. |
| Strategy 11 | Promote and assist landlords and others in accessing existing Provincial housing repair funding. |
| Strategy 12 | Advocate to the federal and provincial governments for additional support for the retention and regeneration of the existing housing stock. |
| Strategy 13 | Develop a strategy for improving compliance with safety and property maintenance standards. |
| Strategy 14 | Explore the option of developing a Regina rental housing repair initiative that involves a revolving fund to provide loans for affordable rental housing repair, and exemptions on incremental taxes due to the repairs/improvements. |
| Strategy 15 | Foster the creation of diverse and economical rental accommodations (Revised Strategy - October 2013). |
| Strategy 16 | Facilitate the creation of additional apartment units through changes to the Zoning Bylaw. |
| Strategy 17 | Establish policies in the Official Community Plan that specify housing targets by type/density, tenure, and affordability; an intensification target; and a rental housing vacancy rate target. |
| Strategy 18 | Add a policy to the Official Community Plan that neighbourhood level plans identify target percentages for different housing types and forms within the neighbourhood (Removed from Implementation). |
| Strategy 19 | Encourage the creation of accessible housing through Official Community Plan policy changes. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy 20</th>
<th>In the Official Community Plan permit housing for persons with special needs, through a range of housing types, in all residential land use designations.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 21</td>
<td>Add a policy to the Official Community Plan to consult and work with Aboriginal groups to develop affordable housing.</td>
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<td>Strategy 22</td>
<td>Add a policy to the Official Community Plan to formalize the city’s policy of discouraging down zoning to support an increased diversity of housing options.</td>
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<td>Strategy 23</td>
<td>Define attainable and affordable housing in the Official Community Plan.</td>
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<td>Strategy 24</td>
<td>Define an adequate land supply in the Official Community Plan.</td>
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<td>Strategy 25</td>
<td>Develop and promote prototypes and pilot initiatives of innovative housing forms.</td>
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<td>Strategy 26</td>
<td>Support a community outreach initiative to demonstrate the benefits and opportunities of increased density and diversity.</td>
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<td>Strategy 27</td>
<td>Continue to support housing and homelessness initiatives through the Community Investment Grants Program and identify ways to allocate funding for maximum community impact.</td>
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<td>Strategy 28</td>
<td>Continue to play a lead role in the federal government’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy by preparing the Community Plan to Address Homelessness.</td>
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<td>Strategy 29</td>
<td>Strengthen Official Community Plan policies related to encouraging a mix of land uses, walkable neighbourhoods, and access to public transportation.</td>
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<td>Strategy 30</td>
<td>Support the redevelopment of brownfields, greyfields and bluefields for affordable housing development.</td>
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<td>Strategy 31</td>
<td>Prepare an implementation plan for the Comprehensive Housing Strategy and annual reports to monitor achievements and outline annual work plans.</td>
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<td>Strategy 32</td>
<td>Consolidate the City’s housing functions, build the capacity of staff related to housing, and dedicate staff time to housing facilitation.</td>
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<td>Strategy 33</td>
<td>Prepare educational materials and engage in educational outreach about the full range of housing and related funding programs available in Regina.</td>
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<td>Strategy 34</td>
<td>Update data in the Comprehensive Housing Strategy when the full 2011 Statistics Canada Census data is released, and adjust strategies as required.</td>
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<td>Strategy 35</td>
<td>Play a lead facilitation role in establishing and coordinating a housing and homelessness coalition of community stakeholders as a way of coordinating collaboration, engaging stakeholders, and obtaining advice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 36</td>
<td>Over time update long-range planning documents to be consistent with the Comprehensive Housing Strategy.</td>
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