

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## CORPORATE REPORT ON STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Building Stronger  
Communities Together**

Waterstone  
CANADA'S  
**MOST  
ADMIRED**  
CORPORATE  
CULTURES  
2020



# Councillor Mathieu Fleury

## *Chair of the OCHC Board*

Around the world, 2020 was a year unlike any other. While the global pandemic has had unprecedented impacts on everyone, it has been particularly challenging for many of the 32,000 residents that call Ottawa Community Housing home. I have been proud and humbled to witness firsthand the passion and commitment with which the Board of Directors and the entire Ottawa Community Housing team have continued to put tenants at the heart of our community response and support, while ensuring the Ottawa Community Housing team's safety during these difficult circumstances.

Throughout Ottawa Community Housing's 2020 Annual Report, there are numerous examples of staff adapting and responding to tenants' vulnerabilities during the repeated changes in provincial and municipal public health measures. Community partnerships forged over many years have been put to the test and successfully contributed to maintaining the health and safety of Ottawa Community Housing's most in-need households. With wellness checks in the thousands, staff and partners' efforts have focused on providing a measure of food security, reducing isolation, and ensuring tenants have access to other social supports and government programs to help them through these extraordinary times.

It is with great pride that I share Ottawa Community Housing's continued progress in advancing the 10-Year Housing Development Framework. Ottawa Community Housing has a number of important development projects progressing including 811 Gladstone, Gladstone Village, Mikinak, Jockvale, Overbrook and more. With these, Ottawa Community Housing strives to build a modern housing portfolio that aligns with Ottawa Community Housing's financial, design, durability and sustainability objectives. For example, 811 Gladstone, also known as Mosaïq, will be Canada's largest residential Passive House apartment building at the time of completion. Mosaïq will add 140 new affordable homes to the Ottawa rental market in the summer of 2021. Planning is also well underway for three mid-rise apartment buildings on the former CFB Rockcliffe Base with construction set to commence in the fall of 2021. And the visions for Rochester Heights, Phase 2 and Gladstone Village are quickly taking shape. Advancing these files has been thanks to the support of the board, my colleagues at City Hall and the expertise and leadership of the Ottawa Community Housing team.

Together, we are working towards a future that will make more affordable housing a reality for Ottawa residents.



# Stéphane Giguère

*Chief Executive Officer of OCHC*

I am honoured to report that OCHC's commitment to our mandate has remained undaunted by COVID-19. Day after day, our team's resilience has shone through. Regardless of whether employees have been on the front lines or working from their homes, they have stayed engaged and supportive of each other and the tenants. No book has ever been written on how to manage a pandemic; however, the team's commitment to our core values of collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence have led the corporation to achieve outstanding results in many areas including community engagement, maintenance and repairs, safety and new construction. This has provided me with a great sense of comfort and thankfulness.

Health measures and restrictions have led to businesses and school closures, forcing residents and families to stay home to stay safe. This resulted in a significant increase in utility costs across the portfolio. With disciplined expense management and government relief funds, OCHC was still able to balance the budget at year-end. With an enduring focus on innovation and sustainability, we delivered approximately 120 capital projects in OCHC communities safely, contributing to healthier and more comfortable homes for tenants.

OCHC has made significant shifts in technology in recent years. As an essential service, this allowed us to quickly adapt to the pandemic situation and remain agile rather than reactive as the seasons passed, and restrictions fluctuated. A great example was moving to digitized tenant files, reducing the exchange of paper and in-person meetings. The monitoring of building components was already happening to ensure that critical mechanical systems were running smoothly at OCHC properties. The vast majority of employees were already connected to the network using mobile devices, making the pivot to remote working fast and efficient.

In 2020, OCHC laid the groundwork for a multi-year Diversity and Inclusion Plan, to heighten awareness and foster a culture of inclusion and belonging across the corporation. Anti-racism workshops presented a safe place for holding frank conversations about this important and sensitive topic and its impact on how we work in the diverse communities we serve. The creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Champions Table was key to getting this initiative up and running.

In closing, I would like to shine a light on the leadership and commitment of all OCHC employees during a difficult year. Despite challenges and worries never experienced before, the team remained flexible, accommodating and hardworking. Proof of their spirit and strength is evidenced by the designation of OCHC as one of the National Capital Region's Top Employers, one of Canada's Most Admired Cultures, an innovator for Green Building of the Year and more.



## 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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COUNCILLOR  
CHAIR



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COUNCILLOR  
EX-OFFICIO  
DIRECTOR



**THERESA KAVANAGH**  
COUNCILLOR  
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**CATHERINE MCKENNEY**  
COUNCILLOR  
DIRECTOR



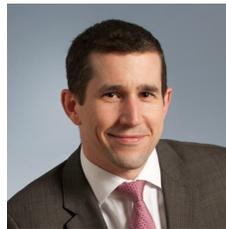
**SCOTT MOFFATT**  
COUNCILLOR  
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**FERENAZ RAHEEM**  
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**DAN DORÉ**  
VICE-CHAIR

**BRENDAN LAWLOR**  
TREASURER

*\*Photo was not available at the time of publishing.*



**REBECCA HICKEY**  
DIRECTOR



**GIRUM SIMMIE**  
DIRECTOR



**PAUL-ÉMILE FORTIN**  
TENANT  
REPRESENTATIVE  
DIRECTOR

### GOALS

Nuture healthy, safe and inclusive communities

Deliver quality services to every tenant, every home

Innovate to meet housing and financial needs

Foster an organizational culture of leadership, accountability and continuous improvement



**32,000 TENANTS**



**\$17,000 AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME/ HOUSEHOLD**



**EXPENDITURE \$166.9 M**



**REVENUES \$150.5 M  
TENANT RENT \$73.3 M**

### VISION

To be a leader in providing safe and affordable homes to enable OCH tenants to fully participate in the socio-economic opportunities of the City.

### MISSION

As a leader in the delivery of quality, affordable housing, OCH collaborates with others to develop safe and healthy communities.

**COLLABORATION**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**RESPECT**

**EXCELLENCE**



### KEY ELEMENTS

- Housing is a key determinant of health
- Positive social environments are critical to successful tenancies
- Tenants must feel safe, proud and part of the broader community
- OCHC relies on effective partnerships to build communities
- Partners play a vital role in OCHC's need to balance resources with growing tenant needs
- Working with partners improves services to tenants

Most OCHC tenants live within Ottawa's greenbelt in homes clustered as townhome complexes and apartments that integrate with broader neighbourhoods.

The people who live in OCHC communities come from many backgrounds and life experiences. What is common is that these people face financial struggles in finding a healthy and safe place to call home. OCHC provides a range of housing solutions based on the requirements of tenants.

Clients include single-parent families, adults with disabilities, families, senior citizens on fixed income and new arrivals to Canada. For many tenants, OCHC plays a critical role as a liaison to other support services to help establish and maintain successful tenancies.

## OCHC VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

OCHC's Volunteer Engagement Program celebrated its ninth year in 2020.

While the pandemic greatly impacted project viability and volunteer availability, OCHC staff stepped in to play a significant role in delivering volunteer projects safely. Additionally, the VEP shifted to an outdoor model that allowed the program to complete several maintenance and beautification projects across the portfolio.

### 2020 Program Highlights

- 20 projects were completed in 13 communities, impacting over 3,000 tenants.
- Over 100 staff, community members, and tenants volunteered with OCHC.
- OCHC volunteers completed about 65% of projects. Historically, this has only been about 15%.



**COMMUNITY CAPITAL FUND**

Since 2009, the Community Capital Fund has contributed more than \$1 million to neighbourhood improvements.

Allocating an annual budget of \$100,000 to the fund is an innovative approach to building communities through collaboration. Tenants, partners and OCHC staff work together to plan and implement, sometimes small but impactful, improvement projects identified by the tenants in their communities.



Outdoor libraries being built for Overbrook.

**CREATING A WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Environmental sustainability is a critical component of the corporation’s approach in building OCHC communities. Developed in 2015, the *Eco<sup>2</sup> Plan* is advancing green technology and innovation across the portfolio. For example, reducing energy consumption through Passive House construction techniques and solar power generation initiatives helps reduce OCHC’s carbon footprint as well as utility costs.

The sustainable management of waste has become a significant area of focus. There is recognition that a reduction in environmental impact can be achieved through diverting waste away from landfills by recycling or composting.

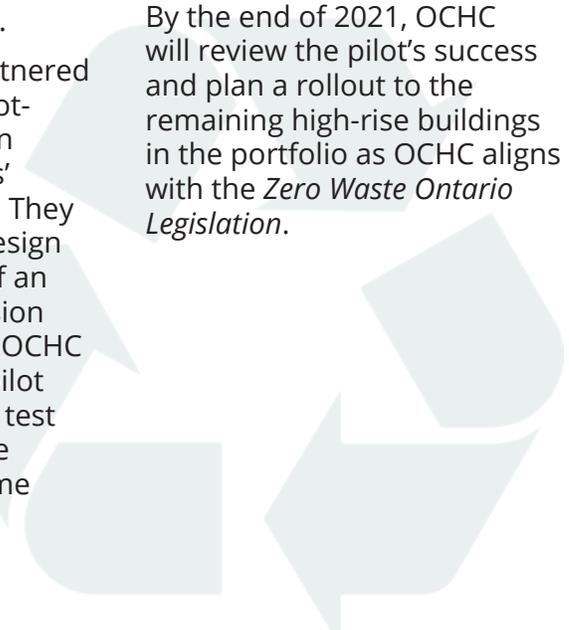
In 2023, the Province of Ontario will require all organics to be diverted from landfills. OCHC has developed and is implementing a strategy for low-rise communities. However, the high-rise buildings present a different challenge where 60% of the waste collected will need to be managed another way.

In 2020, OCHC has partnered with EnviroCenter, a not-for-profit specializing in reducing organizations’ environmental impact. They are helping with the design and implementation of an improved waste diversion collection approach in OCHC high-rise locations. A pilot project will assess and test onsite organics storage options to address some

of the key issues in high-rise buildings, as well as consider organics pick-up and processing options.

We continue to work with the City of Ottawa on the collection schedule and support for these high-density locations.

By the end of 2021, OCHC will review the pilot’s success and plan a rollout to the remaining high-rise buildings in the portfolio as OCHC aligns with the *Zero Waste Ontario Legislation*.



## COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES AND OCHC RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Designated as an essential service, OCHC has been working to support tenants' health and safety while driving its passion for making a difference every day. Since the pandemic onset, OCHC has framed its comprehensive response framework around three key initiatives: staff safety, tenant safety and business continuity.

Recognizing early on in 2020 that OCHC played a pivotal role in maintaining our communities' safety and security, staff were trained and equipped to safely and sustainably provide critical services. This meant reaching out to provincial and municipal public health partners to ensure our practices and processes were aligned with their recommendations and prescribed restrictions. This early action positioned OCHC to continue keeping tenants and staff safe.

Furthermore, OCHC strategically adjusted its service delivery model to support tenants' and staff's needs, and continued with core services, including tenancy administration, community outreach programs, fire life safety program, integrated pest management, community safety and security, and necessary maintenance services.

OCHC also proactively planned with and engaged key stakeholders. OCHC continues to focus on keeping people safe in their workplaces and their homes.



## COVID-WISE COMMUNITY EVENTS

COVID-wise community events during the pandemic have been a critical component in helping sustain safe, healthy and welcoming communities by maintaining strong community bonds and reducing social isolation.





## KEY ELEMENTS

- Focus resources on providing quality and responsive services to tenants
- Smart, diligent and lean customer-centred business model
- Strengthen understanding of client needs
- Growing needs for supports to address increasing complexity of vulnerable populations in housing
- Deploy new technology solutions to streamline and modernize service delivery

Approximately 32,000 people live in OCHC communities. OCHC recognizes that a positive tenant experience is critical to meeting its mandate.

OCHC has continued to build its service model to ensure that quality services are provided to tenants related to lease and rental coordination, safety, home maintenance and pest treatment services.

Significant investments have also been made to provide easier, more accessible options for tenants through an expanded call centre model and greater access to low cost internet services through local providers.



## SUPPORT TO TENANTS DURING LOCKDOWN

The wellbeing of all OCHC tenants has always been paramount but it emerged as a top priority for the corporation during the pandemic. OCHC staff and local agencies worked together to make over 20,000 telephone contacts and over 12,000 in-person visits to tenants from March to December 2020. This was only made possible with the support of dedicated partners: the Red Cross, Options Bytown, Ottawa West Community Services, Ottawa Salus, Tamir, the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, and the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses.

Working with these partners, OCHC identified tenants believed to be the most vulnerable or isolated, including frail seniors, people living with physical or intellectual disabilities, people with mental health challenges, and families that have been negatively impacted by the lockdown and online schooling. The goal was to connect with tenants who may not have had access to family or friends who could offer emotional support

or basic needs such as food. This initiative demonstrates that OCHC cares and is serving tenant needs by providing information about health and community resources, mental health and emotional supports, food and pet supplies, and IT support for online learning.

## TENANT TALKS GO VIRTUAL



Tenant Talks was launched in 2019 and is embedded in the Tenant Experience. It allows OCHC to transition to a tenant partnership model rooted in the slogan, "For me, with me". In 2020, OCHC successfully adapted its approach to offer virtual participation to maintain tenant engagement.

## HOUSING SERVICES ACT ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

The *Housing Services Act* was implemented by the Province of Ontario to facilitate access to affordable housing. Recent changes to the Act have simplified income verification for households receiving rent subsidies. OCHC introduced substantial updates to IT systems, worked with staff and partner agencies to communicate the changes, and prepared for a new way of calculating rent geared to income.

The arrival of Covid-19 resulted in a temporary suspension of all income verification and rent calculations. OCHC's Tenancy Administration team adapted, providing up-to-date information to tenants during a fluid situation, implementing the required changes in compliance with the province's July 1 deadline.

The team navigated the challenges of renting homes during a pandemic while implementing a reduction in the number of homes offered to each applicant from three options to one, which was another of the Act's changes.

In 2021, OCHC will be monitoring these revised processes and continue to provide quality services to applicants and OCHC tenants.

## CALL CENTRE FOCUS ON CALL QUALITY, ONE TENANT AT A TIME

# 221,400 calls

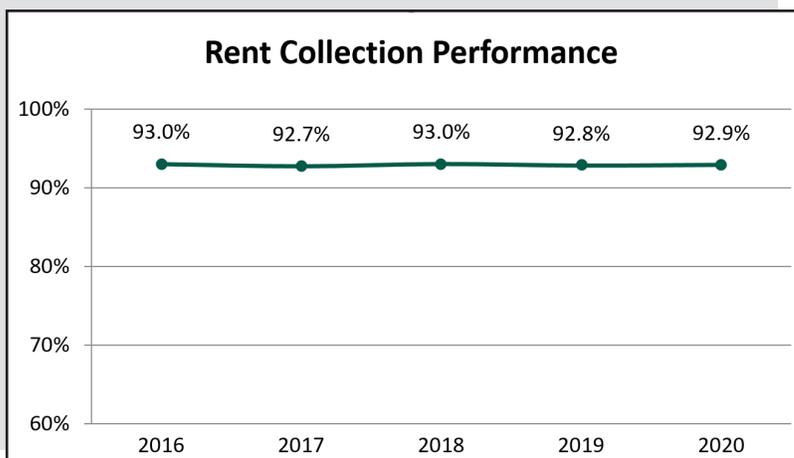
A vital connection for tenants, OCHC's 24/7 call centre responds to general inquiries and handles incoming service requests for home-related maintenance, pest-related issues, safety services and critical building system problems. Tenants dial into a one-number system where incoming calls are directed to the appropriate channel based on each caller's service needs.

In 2020, 221,400 calls were logged. This represented a 9% reduction in the volume of incoming calls from the previous year, attributable to the pandemic lockdowns. Performance objectives set for the year were consistently met.

There was increased time spent on each call due to an intentional focus on quality, first call resolution and the tenant experience.

## TENANTS IN GOOD FINANCIAL STANDING - RENT COLLECTION

# 92.9%



In 2020, the amount of rent collected each quarter averaged 92.9%. This collection rate has been consistent over the last several years.

A newly implemented Rent Collection Procedure focused on helping tenants stay in good financial standing. This became particularly important during the pandemic. The increase in rent arrears that was experienced during the first wave of the pandemic was resolved by year-end.

OCHC will continue to improve rent collection in 2021 and monitor the pandemic's impact on tenants' ability to pay their rent.

## FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR TREATING PESTS

In 2020, the Integrated Pest Management program increased its capacity by four new positions and successfully recruited workers with diverse backgrounds, skills and experience.

Here are 2020 program highlights:

- There has been an increased emphasis on supporting homes with higher levels of pest infestation. Licensed technicians have been working to assist each tenant with any resources required to reduce the pest population in infested homes.
- The IPM team takes a holistic approach, working closely with partner agencies and internal tenant workers to help residents with more acute needs who require assistance when dealing with pest issues in their home.
- IPM inspections and initial response are included in the annual home assessments and provide an opportunity for early detection, the identification of pest activity levels, and initial treatment in a building or community.
- Improvements to the IPM reporting systems to enable the tracking of pest activity and chemical usage. This information is now accessible to technicians in the field.
- A new product has been introduced for the treatment of bed bugs with early signs of success to improve resolution. The product is active for 90 days and can be used as a preventative application. Minimal preparation is needed by tenants.

The IPM team continues to strive for tenant satisfaction by providing a high level of tenant service in every home they attend. The team takes pride in the work they do, with a focus on providing a positive tenant experience on every visit.

The IPM team completed close to 25,000 work orders in 2020 and finished the year with an ability to respond 96% of the time within the expected time period. In 2021, the team will focus on increasing resolution.

## COVID-19 READINESS – THE MAINTENANCE RED TEAM

On March 27, 2020, OCHC trained and equipped a specialized team of maintenance workers to complete emergency repairs in homes with a higher risk of exposure to the virus. Working with the Health and Safety team was a top priority in supporting the efforts toward maintenance workers’ and tenants’ safety. As part of a pre-screening questionnaire, OCHC identified any potential risk of contracting COVID-19 and dispatched what was dubbed the Red Team.

Maintenance workers were quick to volunteer for this Red Team, which truly reflects OCHC’s core values of collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence (C.A.R.E). The Red Team enabled the corporation to perform emergency repairs and continue to positively impact tenants’ experiences during an unprecedented time.

A proactive approach was taken towards keeping workshops, offices and lunchrooms safe by providing weekly sanitization services throughout the portfolio. Each Wednesday, four maintenance workers from the Red Team applied a sanitizing product using electrostatic foggers to all high touchpoints. This practice had a positive impact on employees’ mental health as they noted OCHC proactively trying to limit potential exposure.

OCHC is very lucky to have a team dedicated to helping keep staff and tenants safe. Kudos to the Red Team and their ongoing commitment to this valued work.



# Ottawa Community Housing Foundation

## OUR MISSION

The Ottawa Community Housing Foundation for Healthy Communities exists to break down barriers and alleviate the effects of poverty and inequities faced by people living in OCH.

## OUR PRIORITIES

A vibrant and healthy community is one where everyone counts. We enhance the health and social well-being of 32,000 tenants through leadership, action and collaboration under the following organizational priority areas: **Education, Employment and Community Engagement**. Our programs and initiatives are developed to empower and support tenants of OCH to take a proactive role in their financial, educational and personal situations and to inspire them to embrace a healthier future outlook for their family and for the community.

### YOUTH FUTURES



260  
Applicants

150  
Youth Futures  
Participants



### PACK A SACK

\$20,000

Raised to help support children learn at home and return to school on equal footing.

150

Activity Kits

4

Scavenger  
hunts

25

Bikes and  
scooter  
distributed

### RECLINK

300

Families engaged

5

Truckloads of  
equipment  
distributed



OCH FOUNDATION  
for healthy communities

FONDATION LCO  
pour des communautés saines



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## KEY ELEMENTS

- Meeting housing needs with fiscal constraints
- Pursuing innovative solutions and alternative partnerships
- Extracting and leveraging portfolio value
- Renewing an aging portfolio
- Future capital investment

The housing stock of OCHC continues to age. Buildings are on average 51 years old, and OCHC continues to invest to ensure that homes are maintained in a good state of repair.

The 10-Year Housing Development Plan is being implemented to guide OCHC to leverage the value of OCHC assets, to address capital investment shortfalls and to increase housing capacity.

New developments will be concentrated near public transit, leverage green technology, and ensure capacity for both larger families and barrier-free living.

OCHC recognizes that partnerships with the private sector, the City of Ottawa, and senior levels of government to secure land, financing and supports are essential to the success of the plan.

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

In compliance with the *Ontario Business Corporations Act*, Ernst and Young, the appointed auditors for OCHC completed an audit of financial statements for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. OCHC has independently submitted the audit results to the Shareholder and Service Manager.

There were indicators of strong financial performance in 2020 contained in the auditor’s report. They are as follows:

### 01. 2020 Financial Statements

An unqualified audit opinion confirming the 2020 financial statements are fair, accurate and consistent

### 02. Funds

A fund balance of \$70.6 million, sufficient to support strategic goals and OCHC’s commitment to housing development

### 03. Operating Fund

An operating fund balance of \$3.5 million, in line with the budget.

The year-end financial position was affected by ongoing changes related to the COVID pandemic. OCHC took steps to rationalize and defer expenses to compensate for increased COVID-related utilities, Personal Protective Equipment and cleaning costs.

The 2020 closing balance across all funds is \$70.6 million versus a budget of \$41.6 million. The variance was due primarily to the carry-forward of some multi-year Capital Works projects and higher than anticipated revenues related to property sales and additional capital and COVID-related relief funds received from the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

## DEMONSTRATING FINANCIAL RESILIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

OCHC ended the year 2020 with a balanced budget while navigating unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and related response. Designated an essential service, OCHC adapted business processes and made the necessary technology changes to address the health risks associated with the pandemic.

Safe work protocols were developed in compliance with Ottawa Public Health guidelines to ensure the safety of tenants, employees and contractors. Essential work was prioritized and specialized teams were created to ensure that essential building systems, priority maintenance and emergency work were taken care of on a timely and safe basis 24/7.

These operational changes came with significant increases in costs – for enhanced cleaning, personal protective equipment and safety services. Utility expenses also increased because of tenants spending more time at home. OCHC was able to offset these incremental costs through postponement of new hires, deferral of some project work that could have infringed upon public health guidance and reduction in other discretionary expenses. The combination of strict expense management and the support received from various levels of government enabled OCHC to manage the financial challenges driven by COVID-19.

In 2020, OCHC met its operating targets, advanced strategic portfolio development, addressed capital repair priorities, mobilized community resources for tenant wellbeing, and continued to deliver high-quality service to tenants.



Conceptual Drawing - 715 Mikinak Road

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2019, OCHC established a 10-Year Development Framework to provide continued support to the City of Ottawa's affordable housing requirements. Through disposition, renewal and new construction, OCHC has a well-researched, long-range plan to repair, replace and build upon our current rental portfolio.

Striving to build thousands of new affordable homes over the next 10 -15 years, we will be reliant on the successful orchestration of a multitude of factors, including land, funding, equity and more.

Working towards this goal, OCHC will bring a range of housing options to the rental market

through a mix of townhouses, mid-rise, and high-rise buildings.

2020 marked the year that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation cemented a partnership with OCHC for the construction of approximately 700 affordable new homes across three Ottawa building sites (Rochester Heights Phase I & II, Gladstone Village). In September, CMHC's largest single investment to date of \$167.9 million was announced in the form of a mortgage from the federal government.

The new homes built through this financing will support all ages and demographics, with a portion of the homes dedicated to priority groups.

Two Communities Were Under Construction in 2020

**Mosaïq at 811 Gladstone Avenue and Richelieu Court in Vanier.**

Once completed in 2021, these properties will add 155 new affordable homes to the portfolio.

Three Communities Will Commence Building in 2022

**Rochester Heights phase II, Gladstone Village and Mikinak**

OCHC has successfully obtained financing and is advancing designs on approximately 1,000 new units at the Rochester Heights, Gladstone Village and Mikinak sites. Construction will commence on all of these builds in 2022. Concurrently in the planning/financing phase are another series of buildings which will result in a similar scale of new units commencing in 2023 - 2024.



**This level of activity is ushering in an exciting new chapter for affordable housing in Ottawa with construction at levels not seen for over 40 years.**

**SPOTLIGHT ON NEW DEVELOPMENT – 715 MIKINAK**

The Mikinak Redevelopment is part of OCHC’s comprehensive 10-Year Development Plan.

The land being developed is located in Wateridge Village, the former site of the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Rockcliffe. The parcel acquired by OCHC will include the development of 271 affordable homes distributed across three mid-rise buildings.

The foundation of this development is to create a space for people, buildings, and ecology to work together for a healthy community, indoors and out. Mikinak will feature welcoming building lobbies, fitness rooms, laundry and community rooms.

Planned outdoor amenity spaces include two BBQ areas, a senior playground & fitness area, a junior playground, an urban farm, and passive sitting areas.

Its prime location is in close proximity to major parks and is a place where residents, those that work in the area, and visitors can gather and socialize. Tenants choosing this neighbourhood will have access to employment opportunities, as well as education at the Collège La Cité, a walking distance away.

In line with OCHC’s sustainability goals, the performance levels of the Passive House building standard will be applied to this new build. Construction is slated to begin in late 2021.



## BUILDING STANDARDS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Design standards for all new builds were developed in 2020 with a focus on long-term operational efficiency, durability and life-cycle costing, sustainability, and energy savings with the goal of providing safe and healthy housing that responds to the needs of the community. The resulting longevity of each new project will allow OCHC to offer deeper affordability to residents over time.



Rochester Heights Phase 1 (811 Gladstone)

### KEEPING OUR HOMES IN GOOD CONDITION

In 2020, OCHC committed \$14 million to the Capital Works Program to keep tenants' homes in good condition and improve the overall tenant experience.

The program focused on infrastructure repair to the properties, including roofing, cladding, structural restoration, landscaping, mechanical systems, fire safety system renewals, and other critical building improvements.

While significant restrictions were put in place to ensure the safety of staff and tenants to reduce the spread of COVID-19, approximately 120 capital projects were completed in 2020. As a result of the pandemic lingering, some of them will be completed in 2021 instead.

Some of the most significant projects undertaken in 2020 included the pilot program for general replacement of the access control systems and the recladding of Confederation Court and 1485 Caldwell. Phase one of a two-phase site redevelopment at Michele Heights began in June 2020. The scope of work includes site grading and drainage upgrades, parking lot and walkway paving, rear and front yard landscaping, front and rear step replacement, fence replacement and sewer service installation.

### STRIVING FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

OCHC moved forward on several key sustainability initiatives last year. The first-ever Sustainability Report was produced, outlining utility consumption and savings as well as reporting on the portfolio's greenhouse gas emissions.

Since the introduction of a dedicated sustainability resource in 2010 and the subsequent creation of the Eco<sup>2</sup> Plan, the addition of solar panels, home weatherization, plumbing and window and door retrofits to the portfolio have saved OCHC over \$38 million in utility costs.

The Waste Management Plan was developed and approved, which is key to OCHC meeting bylaw requirements and diversion of waste from landfills. A solar maintenance provider was engaged to improve the efficiency of over 35 solar installations, which will help to reduce our carbon footprint.

New energy retrofits were also initiated – namely the Pre-fabricated Exterior Energy Retrofit pilot. This project aims to revitalize four aging townhomes on Presland Avenue to net-zero energy status and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. OCHC is also moving forward with several new housing developments that have ambitious sustainability goals.

**NEW WINDOWS AND DOORS FOR 31 MCEWEN**

This \$2.7 million retrofit received funding under the Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program and exemplifies OCHC's commitment to improving existing communities while reducing our energy consumption. The project included the wholesale removal and replacement of windows, balcony doors and bathroom exhaust fans with modern, energy-efficient assemblies in all 177 apartments. The ground floor glazing and main entrance doors were also replaced, as well as the exterior lounge doors and exit doors. The installation of new exterior exhaust grilles will improve the ventilation in areas with higher humidity like the building's central laundry room.

**MC EWEN: REPLACEMENT OF OVER 400 WINDOWS AND 180 DOORS**



**CONFEDERATION COURT: CLADDING REPAIRS, SIDING & WINDOWS REPLACEMENT**



## MAINTENANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Asset Management Operations continued with a \$5.9 million investment in maintenance and services on essential building systems during the pandemic to meet all legislative requirements and ensure a safe and comfortable environment for tenants.

IN 2020, THE ASSET MANAGEMENT  
TEAM ADMINISTERED

### TESTS, INSPECTIONS & MAINTENANCE ON...

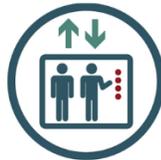


**26,000**

SMOKE ALARMS

**6,000**

CARBON MONOXIDE  
ALARMS



**121**

ELEVATORS



**5,300**

FURNACES



**189**

INSTANCES  
GREATER THAN  
\$5,000 DUE TO  
FIRE, WATER, ETC.

### IMPROVING FIRE LIFE SAFETY IN OCHC COMMUNITIES

Since 2016, OCHC has been advancing its Fire Life Safety Program across the portfolio in compliance with the Province of Ontario's fire standards.

Throughout the pandemic, OCHC completed regularly scheduled inspections and upgrades to fire prevention and detection systems in every community.

Due to physical distancing requirements, efforts were shifted to deliver education programs electronically to tenants. The program "After the Fire" was delivered in partnership with Ottawa Fire Services to educate tenants on fire safety and how to prevent a fire and to remind them what to do if a fire is discovered.



## FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



### KEY ELEMENTS

- Strategic focus and effective governance
- Business intelligence and results-based management
- Building organizational culture
- Human resources management
- Changing profile of the modern worker and the work environment
- Leveraging technology
- Lean and effective business processes
- Ensuring effective media and public relations

In 2020, OCHC completed its fifth year of operations under its current 10-year strategic plan.

The strategic plan looks to use stronger governance, management systems and innovation to ensure that OCHC is able to build and maintain the housing portfolio, deliver quality tenant services and support healthy communities.

Investing in the organization's culture, employees and technology are critical elements of the strategy. In 2018, a culture statement was introduced: We are proud because every day we make a difference.

OCHC recognizes that it is part of a large housing ecosystem and that it must learn, share and partner to build capacity and play a leadership role in this critical work.

Waterstone  
CANADA'S  
**MOST ADMIRABLE  
CORPORATE  
CULTURES**  
2020



### PEER RECOGNITION

Industry recognition is an integral part of OCHC's growth and continued development. It provides self-reflection and self-evaluation, a process that validates the team's hard work and achievements and builds engagement. It enhances OCHC's credibility and leadership across the housing sector and beyond. And it highlights and celebrates innovative approaches that can help pave the path for others to follow.

OCHC was honoured with awards for a number of accomplishments in 2020.

- 2020 National Capital Region Top Employer: recognizing Ottawa-area employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work
- 2020 Canadian HR Awards - Best Social Responsibility Strategy: recognizing organizations that have embedded corporate social responsibility into their culture.
- Waterstone Human Capital's Most Admired Corporate Culture 2020: a three-year designation honouring best-in-class Canadian organizations for having a culture that helps enhance performance and sustain a competitive advantage
- Association of Energy Engineers Young Energy Professional of the Year for Dan Dicaire: shining a light on outstanding contributions to the energy profession
- Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association Innovation Award – Green Building of the Year for 1290 Coldrey: recognizing new building projects that demonstrate leadership in the implementation of green building and/or outstanding environmental and energy performance

An OCHC tenant, Guy Clairoux, was honoured with the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association's 2020 Tenant Achievement Award for his community leadership and volunteerism. The Human Resources team was also shortlisted as a finalist by the Canadian HR Awards for their exceptional HR strategies and initiatives in the 'Under 500 Employees' category.

## FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Declared an essential service, OCHC delivered critical services while considering employees' health, safety and wellbeing. To provide these critical services while adhering to Ottawa Public Health guidelines, a rotational schedule was implemented for front-line employees. Employees unable to report to work due to childcare issues were offered remote working options where possible, and access to flexible paid-leave options.

### VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

OCHC is committed to supporting employee mental health and overall wellness. In addition to creating a Wellness Committee, it believes in the value of accessing timely professional counselling support to build and sustain personal resiliency. Given the challenges brought on by the pandemic, new supports for employees, such as virtual mental health care, were added to their benefits package. Pulse surveys were conducted and employees' responses provided input and feedback that informed plans and actions to best support them.

### REMOTE WORK PROGRAM

Efforts over the past few years to digitalize OCHC operations paid-off, when the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly struck in March 2020. OCHC pivoted almost 70% of its workforce to remote work within few hours, revealing the extent of the adaptability and resiliency of employees at all levels of the corporation.

### MULTI-YEAR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

Being representative of the communities it serves will lead OCHC to provide the best quality of service for tenants and enhance decision-making. This is why a Multi-Year Diversity and Inclusion Plan is underway, to create a corporate culture that champions the diversity of OCHC communities and inspires inclusivity, equity and belonging.

Established in early 2020, a Diversity and Inclusion Champions Table, comprised of staff and leaders, as well as members of OCHC's Board of Directors, is overseeing the progress of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

A key aspect of OCHC's culture journey is having both employees and a dedicated leadership team who are committed to moving the corporation forward and creating a positive change to nurture a culturally diverse and inclusive space. Seven employee resource groups will raise awareness, engage partnerships and develop initiatives in the following key areas: Women in the Workplace; Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC); the Multigenerational Workforce; Persons with Disabilities; Diversity of Thought; Anti-Racism; and the LGBTQ2+ community.

### BUILDING A TALENT PIPELINE

Coaching, learning investments, and development opportunities is OCHC's recipe for retaining good people and helping them achieve their career goals. In 2020, approximately 34 percent of competitions were filled by employees through successful internal promotions. This was up from 20 percent filled internally the previous year.

## FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Like most corporations, OCHC and its departments shifted once the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Corporate Communications workplan and activities were reprioritized to align resources to the organizational impact and requirements as OCHC was confirmed an essential service by the Ontario government.

The team continued to collaborate and support every OCHC department to create opportunities to educate, engage and deliver compelling content to tenants through awareness campaigns using various platforms and approaches. It increases public awareness of OCHC as a leader in delivering social and affordable housing in the City of Ottawa while mitigating reputational risk when met with emerging issues. It also improves efficiency and effectiveness of communications by leveraging technologies and communication opportunities.



### ANALYTICS CONTRIBUTING TO THE BROADER HOUSING SECTOR

At a time when technology has enabled an exponential increase in data collection, organizations like OCHC are investing in new and innovative tools to turn operational data into valuable insights.

OCHC's corporate systems are increasingly being leveraged to drive corporate efficiencies and produce business intelligence to help senior leaders make informed decisions to best execute against strategic priorities.

OCHC has played a lead role in providing performance measurement expertise to develop structure, measurement tools and data visualization for social housing benchmarks across six core performance areas. Initially established at the provincial level with Ontario's Local Housing Corporations, the six benchmarks established in 2020 have garnered national attention and have been adopted by Housing Partnership Canada.

- Housing Occupancy Rate
- Unit Turnover Days
- Tenant Move-Out Rate
- Tenants in Good Financial Standing
- Rent Collection Rate
- Eviction Prevention Rate

The introduction of housing benchmarks with standardized data has many benefits. They

will strengthen the social housing sector's understanding of housing trends, risks and opportunities; contrast sector business performance, identify best practices and areas for collaboration; and increase evidence-based, senior-level discussions and decision-making for the sector's many stakeholders. OCHC is proud to be at the forefront of a vital initiative that will help shape the future of affordable housing for all Canadians.

Senior leaders at OCHC are making impacts across the sector in other ways – by participating on boards and in research groups, such as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, the Canadian Apartment Renewal Association, Housing Services Corporation and the Ottawa Social Housing Network, to name a few.

In 2020, OCHC became involved in a national research project through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Coordinated by the University of Alberta, the group looks to create and mobilize knowledge that contributes to sustainability and resilience in the community housing sector. OCHC is supporting a team that is evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of community housing models used in Canada against National Housing Strategy priorities. By sharing knowledge and informing policy development and practices in community housing, this project aims to bolster the community housing sector's functions and capacity to help Canadian households fulfill their right to housing.

## FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

In 2016, OCHC introduced a standardized approach to assessing governance performance by monitoring governance processes and conducting an annual survey.

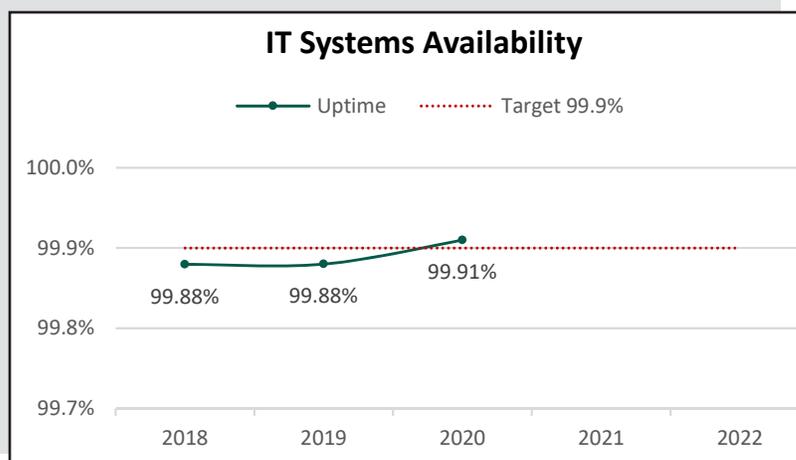
Throughout 2020, OCHC's governance performance remained strong, achieving an overall rating of 88.2%. While there was a very slight decline in the aggregate measure, the 2020 result represents a 3.2% increase since OCHC introduced the standardized governance evaluation approach in 2016.

The pandemic required OCHC to adapt its governance and accelerate its plan to improve online tools and provide Board and Committee members with opportunities for virtual meeting participation. As a result, performance continued to be strong across the six measurement areas (DICES Governance Survey, meeting preparation, execution, attendance, follow-through and governance learning). There was a significant increase of 7.2% in governance meeting attendance, mainly attributed to the convenience of an online meeting platform.

While the results demonstrate high levels of sustained governance performance with no significant governance risks, OCHC will continue to strengthen governance discussion and strategic focus through 2021.

### OCHC CYBER SECURITY

# 99.9%



OCHC did not experience any cyber security breaches in 2020 and continued to mitigate risk over potentially malicious emails.

2020 brought unique challenges for OCHC's IM/IT group. When the workforce was required to work remotely, IT responded very quickly to this unprecedented challenge by enabling the majority of employees to fulfill their duties from home successfully. In order to maintain the security of data and assets, the transition included considerations to OCHC's combination of cloud-based systems and users' direct and secure connection to business systems to ensure critical front-line support to tenants.

### Training and Phishing

Ongoing cyber security training and simulated tests resulted in a further reduction in staff vulnerability to phishing emails from 7.2% in 2019 to 3.6% by the end of 2020.

### Multi-Factor Authentication

The IM/IT Roadmap supports one of OCHC's long-term strategic goals of "delivering quality services to every tenant, every home". Along the path to continuous improvement, IM/IT implemented multi-factor authentication, providing an additional security layer for staff access to OCHC resources. Multi-factor authentication significantly improves staff resiliency to cyber security threats and is a vital tool in ensuring security across IT systems and networks.

OCHC maintained its system availability performance target of 99.91% uptime.

*This annual report is dedicated to the memory of Brent Schwieg, former Director of Strategy and Governance. His professionalism, diligence and kindness made us all better. The annual report was one of his accomplishments to reflect on OCHC staff and tenants' collective efforts to build better and stronger communities.*