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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2026-INFO-20
Date: April 2, 2026

Subject:

GTHA Community Housing Collaborative – CANCEA Research Project – The Public Housing Dividend: Building Economic Resilience & Social Value

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Regional Council with information on The Public Housing Dividend: Building Economic Resilience & Social Value, a research initiative being undertaken by the GTHA Community Housing Collaborative, which will assess the macroeconomic and social impacts of public housing investment across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).
- 1.2 The report outlines the scope, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of the research, including how the findings will support evidence-based decision-making related to public housing investment, infrastructure renewal, and long-term system sustainability.

2. GTHA Community Housing Collaborative

- 2.1 The GTHA Community Housing Collaborative brings together the six largest public housing providers in the GTHA. Members include Housing Durham, City Housing Hamilton, Halton Community Housing Corporation, Peel Housing Corporation, Toronto Community Housing, and Housing York.
- 2.2 The collaborative represents approximately 40% of the public housing stock in Ontario, including over 81,500 homes, more than \$20B in assets, and housing more than 150,000 tenants.

2.3 Partners are collectively responsible for the stewardship, renewal, and expansion of community housing stock across the GTHA and share the belief that strong community housing infrastructure is essential to affordability, economic prosperity, and community wellbeing for low and middle-income households.

3. The Public Housing Dividend: Building Economic Resilience & Social Value

3.1 A first-of-its-kind research partnership between Canada's largest cluster of public housing providers and Scotiabank (ScotiaRISE), using agent-based modelling to assess the macroeconomic and social impacts of public housing investment.

3.2 The research is being led by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) and brings government, housing, development, and finance into a single evidence-based framework, representing the most comprehensive modelling of public housing impacts to date. The project:

- a. Introduces a new economic framework to demonstrate the return on investment of public housing as essential infrastructure, including impacts on productivity, healthcare costs, and long-term economic resilience.
- b. Models multiple investment scenarios across the more than 8M residents of the GTHA, including maintaining, increasing, or reducing investment in capital repairs and new development.
- c. Quantifies system-wide outcomes including economic output, labour force participation, healthcare utilization, and social assistance costs by explicitly modelling trade-offs between upfront capital investment and downstream public expenditures.

3.3 Findings are expected to be published in May 2026.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. Connected and Vibrant Communities
 - C2. Enable a full range of housing options, including housing that is affordable and close to transit.
- b. Healthy People, Caring Communities
 - H3. Integrate and co-ordinate service delivery for positive life outcomes, including investments in poverty prevention, housing solutions, and homelessness supports.
- c. Strong Relationships

- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The GTHA Community Housing Collaborative's partnership with CANCEA represents a significant effort to quantify the economic and social value of public housing as essential infrastructure. By applying agent-based modelling across multiple investment scenarios, the research will provide a robust, evidence-based framework to better understand the long-term impacts of public housing investment on economic productivity, health outcomes, and public expenditures.
- 5.2 As a member of the GTHA Community Housing Collaborative, Housing Durham's participation in this initiative supports broader regional and provincial discussions on housing affordability, infrastructure investment, and economic resilience. The findings, expected in May 2026, will offer valuable insights to inform future policy development, funding advocacy, and strategic planning across all orders of government.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Commissioner of Social Services