



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 - 2023



CORE ELEMENTS

Vision

Wood Buffalo is a region where everyone has access to safe and affordable housing.

Mission

We collaborate to pursue safe and sustainable housing solutions for the people of our region.

Core Values

The following Core Values fortify the culture of Wood Buffalo Housing. Applying these values to everything we do ensures we deliver our services in the most effective way.

Service:	<i>We work as a team to provide a quality customer SERVICE experience for the community and our tenants.</i>
Respect:	<i>We show RESPECT to each other, our tenants, our community partners, and our stakeholders.</i>
Integrity:	<i>We show INTEGRITY in all of our actions as we work to serve others.</i>
Innovation:	<i>We show INNOVATION as we strive to do an even better job for the people we serve.</i>
Collaboration:	<i>We show COLLABORATION as everyone contributes equally.</i>

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The 2020 strategic planning session delved into the three strategic priorities that were part of our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan and evaluated them against the new realities our corporation and the entire region and world are experiencing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing economic recession, and the spring flooding to determine if they were still relevant. It was decided that these priorities have not changed and should remain our focus for the next three years. However, the means and tactics we will use to achieve them have changed.

The three strategic priorities for this plan include:

1. Ensure the **financial viability and sustainability** of Wood Buffalo Housing.
2. **Strategically engage stakeholders**. This includes identifying, developing and nurturing key partnerships.
3. Establish a focus on continuous improvement of **customer service**.

1. FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fiscal sustainability is a key priority given the deficit and environmental factors we are currently facing. Without financial stability we will no longer be in business. It was agreed at the strategic planning session that full recovery is at least 3-5 years away due to the pandemic and flooding in 2020 and continued economic decline. We are back at year one in the recovery process and need to ensure cashflow is closely managed during this time.

Potential Outcomes of Fiscal Sustainability

- Deficit elimination and balanced budget by 2024.
- Zero-based budgeting.
- Annual budget reflects the corporate values.

Goals

- Sustain WBH as an integral housing management body in the region, that is committed to ensuring "everyone has access to safe and affordable housing".
- Eliminate the deficit and balance the budget by 2023.
- Align the annual budget with corporate strategic direction and values.
- Establish a fiscally sustainable business model.

Measurement Targets

These targets will be set by Administration and approved by the Board.

- Budget actuals
- Audit report recommendations
- Risk register priorities and actions

Action Plans

1	Develop a service delivery model that helps address the challenges for rural communities.
2	Survey stakeholders for suggestions to inform budgeting.
3	Utilize zero-based budgeting; Ensure fiscally viable budgets and realistic service levels.
4	Continue quarterly financial reporting, including management analysis, and recommendations.
5	Continue to monitor, update, and report on Risk Register.
6	Look at what we can do operationally to utilize assets more efficiently to cut overhead costs, including the possibility of divesting some assets.
7	Explore potential grants/CMHC funding under the National Housing Strategy, or grants related to environmental upgrades.
8	Complete a 20-year Asset Management Plan, including an in depth review of required maintenance.
9	Look at other services we can add in our buildings, like ATMs, game rooms, etc.
10	Ensure we are getting the best interest rates, insurance rates and mortgage renewal rates.
11	Look at rate riders on certain utilities; make application for a waiver or grant to cover these costs.
12	Create mutually beneficial partnerships with community groups, local businesses, industry, etc. in an effort to reduce the vacancy by attraction and retention of tenants.

2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the future success of the organization. A stakeholder engagement process will be developed to inform and enhance the vision of Wood Buffalo Housing as leading ***“a region where everyone has access to safe and affordable housing”***.

This heightened approach to stakeholder relations is imperative in view of challenges the organization has faced as a result of the ongoing economic downturn, the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 spring flooding and is essential to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. It will be a critical part of recovery for WBH, and we must keep stakeholders close, informed and follow their trends/needs. We also need to be innovative in our approach because of the reduction of our internal resources and utilize the services of professional lobbyists who can reach the high influencers and decision makers.

Potential Outcomes

- Decreased vacancy rate that is on par with budget.
- Enhanced relationships with all levels of government.
- WBH is seen as the employer and housing management body of choice in the Wood Buffalo Region.
- WBH is seen as a valuable community partner and advocate for the people of this region.

Goals

- Demonstrate value and importance of the mission to the Wood Buffalo community.
- Enhance reputation and general understanding of the services provided by WBH, as well as our community impact.
- Attract and retain more tenants.
- Create partnerships that have reciprocal benefits.
- WBH will be known as a credible source of policy advice regarding social and affordable housing.
- WBH will be viewed by rural communities, industry and other community agencies as a productive and effective community partner.
- Engaged, motivated, supported, and valued staff who have a sense of stability.

Measurement Targets

These targets will be set by Administration and approved by the Board.

- Vacancy Rate
- Staff turnover rates
- Tenant retention/turnover/referral rates

Stakeholder Mapping and Action Plans

Each stakeholder requires a different set of actions. We have developed a detailed Stakeholder Mapping and Action Plan, which is attached to this document.

**** See Appendix A: Stakeholder Mapping and Action Plan.**

3. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is a priority for the organization and will be a key component of our future success as tenants now have more choice in the market and with private landlords. However, we also need to manage the costs associated. We have to establish service level expectations and communicate those to all current and new tenants. These can be based on industry standards, and they help the tenants to better understand their own responsibilities as part of their lease.

Potential Outcomes of Customer Service Focus

- Impact community by moving beyond delivering a service upon request to addressing underlying needs.
- Add value to the community in leading by example.
- Create satisfied tenants who feel respected and appreciated.
- Retain tenants and reduce costs.
- Attract new tenants, reducing the vacancy rate and budget deficit.

Goals

- Enhance the Wood Buffalo Vision as leading "a region where everyone has access to safe and affordable housing".
- Educate and promote complementary social supports for our clients.
- Increased awareness of WBH reputation, services, and community impact.
- Retain tenants and optimize operations and operating costs.
- Attract new tenants; reduce the vacancy rate and budget deficit.

Measurement Targets

These targets will be set by Administration and approved by the Board.

- Tenant retention/turnover/referral rates
- Controllable v. uncontrollable factors

Action Plans

1	Explore ways to streamline processes. Establish metrics and assign priorities of what needs to be serviced first (i.e. Is it an urgent service?). Focus on efficiency of service.
2	Create a Tenant Handbook that outlines service standards and expectations (i.e. Give examples of types of services offered and what is an acceptable turnaround timeframe for specific tasks).
3	Ensure tenant responsibilities are made known at the time of move-in.
4	Tell the story around our good "customer service"; celebrate what we do well and inform others.
5	Get feedback on what our current tenants want, then find a way to deliver what we can (annual tenant surveys, etc.). Share all data collected with the team so that it can inform your plans, and communicate the information gathered back to tenants and stakeholders.
6	Explore whether there are any grants to get some of these services implemented.
7	Continue to collect stats to track service level standards (work orders, reasons for move-outs).
8	Maximize efficiencies of Yardi; better continuation of information between tenants and landlord
9	Create an opportunities register that outlines potential for mixed-use space within our buildings or on our properties and adding complementary services. Target and explore feasibility of each opportunity.

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APPENDIX A:
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ACTION PLAN

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Stakeholder	Key Results/Goals	Engagement Initiatives
Tenants	Engage and inform current tenants about WBH's programs and customer service standards.	Improve communications through use of the corporate web site, social media and tenant portal. Use WBH channels to engage current tenants with information about contests, promotions, Tenant Referral Program, events, etc.
	Create tenants who are ambassadors for WBH and see us as valuable to the community.	Need to 'tell our story'; let tenants and prospective tenants know about our programs and what we do for the community. Quarterly Tenant Newsletter: should include useful information about WBH, tips for tenants and community supports.
Tenants	Attract and retain more tenants.	Tenant surveys completed every two years.
		Bi-annual tenant meetings.
		Annual contests to engage tenants.
		Conduct exit surveys to determine reasons for people moving out.
		Establish a Neighbourhood Watch/ community care program so that tenants are engaged in where they live.
		Promote the Tenant Referral Program.
		Offer affordable value-added services.
		Set service standard expectations for tenants at the start of their lease; inform them of reasonable turnaround timeframes for requests.
Seniors	Develop a seniors' master development plan (current seniors' accommodation plus Willow Square).	Establish key priorities based on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.
	WBH will be seen as a leader in affordable housing for seniors within the region and Province.	Include key priorities for next stages of seniors' care in our Business Plan.
		Make sure Ministers and MLAs are informed on our needs and lobby government for funding.
		Inform the people of the region about the services and facilities we have available for seniors.
	Routinely engage with seniors agencies within the region.	
Employees	Engaged, motivated, supported, and valued staff who have a sense of stability.	Teambuilding sessions, contests, once a quarter.

	Staff members will understand and actively support the Corporation’s social responsibility mandate as it relates housing.	<p>Weekly Updates from the President.</p> <p>Service recognition and awards.</p> <p>Customer service and other training sessions.</p> <p>Employee referral program.</p> <p>Ensure staff are engaged, motivated, supported, informed and valued during these challenging times.</p>
Board	Have a well-informed Board that is equipped to advocate on behalf of the organization.	<p>Build relationships and work with the Board to implement the strategic plan.</p> <p>Annual Board Orientation Session</p> <p>Annual Strategic Planning Workshop</p> <p>Regular PD sessions for Board members prior to meetings. Topics can include such things as effective board governance, building trust, etc.</p> <p>Weekly Updates</p> <p>Keep Board informed of all pressing issues for the Corporation.</p> <p>Develop ‘Elevator Pitch’ and key messages for Board.</p>
Prospective tenants/local community	Attract more tenants.	Create strategic advertising for all promotions and rental opportunities.
	Enhance reputation and general understanding of WBH programs and services.	Create consistent brand awareness radio campaigns.
	WBH will be viewed by the public as effectively meeting community social and gap housing needs.	Attend meetings and committees with local service agencies to allow more opportunities to inform them of what we do and what we have available.
	Be the go-to housing management body within the region for affordable housing.	Attend local community events and tradeshows to share information on our programs.
		Promote WBH widely as a valued social profit supporting the community, and as a leader in affordable housing. Tell our story about what we do for the people of the region.
		Create sponsorship / funding opportunities with community partners.
		Create a Business to Business strategy; form partnerships with local businesses within the region that are mutually beneficial. Explore ways we can help one another to navigate this ‘new normal’.
		Create and maintain a customer service database with up to date contact information and meeting information.

Indigenous partners/rural hamlets	WBH will be viewed by as a trusted partner and expert in affordable housing management.	Establish MOUs with Indigenous groups.
	Rural and Indigenous residents will have increased access to the housing they need.	Identify expectations and ways to work together.
	The WBH board will have improved visibility within the municipality and within the rural communities served.	Utilize Regional Housing Needs Assessment to lobby for more funding.
	Rural community housing needs will be clearly articulated.	Development of locally managed housing body. Develop Key Priorities Based on Needs Assessment. Effective and productive communications networks will be maintained with rural communities, other levels of government and other government agencies. Quarterly updates for each partner.
Other local Indigenous groups	Work together to collectively address rural subsidized housing.	Meet to determine housing needs/gaps for their groups.
		Identify and explore options for how WBH can help to address those needs/gaps.
Local businesses and commercial stakeholders	Establish WBH as housing provider of choice for their staff.	Create Business to Business Strategy that includes a list of partners that could offer mutual benefits; customer service management database.
	Ensure local businesses and stakeholders are aware of what we do and how we can help them.	Create sponsorship / funding opportunities with community partners.
		Make Sales Calls. Establish promotion/incentive packages custom for each business' needs.
Schools/colleges	College administration and students are aware of housing promotions and WBH programs.	Meet with Student Association to identify gaps in housing for students/staff.
		Build a B2B strategy for them.
		Look at partnership opportunities (i.e. student housing).
Industry and contractors	Established positive, productive partnerships with industry and community agencies that support the achievement of the WBH mission and business plan priorities.	Identify grants and draft applications.
		Meet with each company to identify gaps in housing for staff.
		Build & maintain potential partnerships for housing staff as an alternative to camps.

		<p>Create sponsorship / funding opportunities with community partner.</p> <p>Implement master service agreements with contractors to provide the services we need on a call-off basis to ensure value for money.</p>
Province	The Government of Alberta will view the WBH as a credible source of policy advice regarding social and affordable housing and understand of the housing needs of our region.	<p>Educate and inform all levels of government on the important role that WBH plays in this region, and what we need from them in order to continue providing these valuable services. Create an impact document that outlines what the region would look like without our services.</p> <p>Identify key asks for funding and key priorities, as well as possible grants.</p> <p>Advocate for continued funding for community supports. (i.e., Rent Supplement)</p> <p>Continue to manage the programs within budgets.</p> <p>Meet with or correspond with local MLAs, Ministers and Deputy Ministers to ensure they are informed of our key issues.</p> <p>Engage with governments, Indigenous groups, and industry to collectively address rural subsidized housing.</p>
Federal government	The Government of Canada will view the WBH as a credible source of policy advice regarding social and affordable housing and understand the housing needs of our region.	<p>Build relationship with local MP. Setup quarterly meetings or communication to identify issues.</p> <p>Educate and inform all levels of government on the important role that WBH plays in this region, and what we need from them in order to continue providing these valuable services.</p> <p>Identify grants and draft applications.</p> <p>Establish relationship with CMHC and identify potential grants that we can apply for.</p>
RMWB	WBH will be viewed as a trusted partner and the “go to” organization. to meet community affordable and social housing needs within the municipality.	<p>Monthly Updates for Mayor, Council and CAO.</p> <p>WBH will provide timely, accurate information to the RMWB on its strategic priorities and results achieved.</p> <p>Seek ways for RMWB to advocate for funding for housing and housing supports.</p> <p>Educate and inform RMWB on the important role that WBH plays in this region, and what we need from them in order to continue providing these valuable services. Create an impact document that outlines what the region would</p>

		look like without our services (from boom times to now).
		Develop key messaging for Mayor, Council and CAO so that when they attend events and meetings with key influencers they can lobby on our behalf.
Local agencies	Establish a relationship with local agencies that is mutually beneficial and supportive.	<p>WBH will actively and effectively partner with other community agencies to help reduce homelessness in our community.</p> <p>Attend monthly Newcomer Interagency Network meetings, and Community Interagency Network meetings.</p> <p>Educate and promote complementary social supports for our clients.</p> <p>Engage with the various groups and committees. Cross-promote the services amongst the groups and seek any potential collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Work with them to improve their model so that it is more effective for all stakeholders.</p>
Other landlords	Build relationships with other landlords that is supportive and collaborative.	<p>Work with local landlords to house tenants that we cannot accommodate.</p> <p>Collaborate on housing initiatives.</p> <p>Seek their help to lobby for extra housing supports for the people of this region.</p>
Lenders	Financial sustainability of WBH to ensure debt is serviced.	Continually monitor the market interest rates and focus on financial sustainability.
Other Northern Communities	Establish mutually beneficial relationships with other northern communities that have similar challenges in regard to affordable housing.	Seek out ways to work together to increase our voice amongst provincial and federal funders by lobbying for similar needs/resources.