Unitarian House of Ottawa

Strategic Framework 2025-2028

Sustaining and evolving our unique and inspired UHO community

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
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About this framework

In 2024, Unitarian House of Ottawa (UHO) celebrated 40 years of charity, community and caring. As we take that legacy forward, we know our context is changing. People are enjoying longer lives, which brings new expectations and new needs for care, and the campus of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is transforming.

This *2025-2028 Strategic Framework* sets the direction for UHO's continued evolution mindful of those shifting realities. It is the result of a process co-designed by UHO's Strategic Planning Steering Committee and a third-party facilitator, informed by consultations with 79 people across UHO's Board of Governors, Residents Association, management team, staff, volunteers, residents and their families, waiting list registrants and the First Unitarian congregation. Ultimate responsibility for the framework rests with UHO's Board of Governors.

In defining the way ahead for UHO, this strategic framework acknowledges the values we stand for, the collective strengths that make us unique, and the opportunities we have to make our special place even more so — today and for the future. It reflects our aspiration to be the best we can be and our belief that others can benefit from our experience.

Our vision

What we want for residents

Our active and engaged community is home to older adults of all means and circumstances. People here belong, contribute and feel valued. More than residents, they're neighbours and friends, sharers and carers — and proud to call Unitarian House of Ottawa home.

Our mission

Our role in realizing the vision

Unitarian House of Ottawa is a charitable not-for-profit organization that provides affordable housing as well as quality care and support for older adults. We enable a vibrant, fulfilling seniors' community where residents, staff and volunteers contribute together to the wellbeing and safety of those who live here — and will continue to do so for decades to come.

What we stand for

The commitments that guide us in all we do

Community
We believe people's lives are richer, happier and healthier in community. We foster engagement in our community while respecting individuals' independence and personal choices.

Quality
We personalize the care and support we provide to suit each individual, ensuring health and safety and upholding high standards for our facilities and services.

Respect
We honour the unique value of every member of our community, listening with interest and ensuring all voices are heard.

Kindness
We maintain an appreciative culture, seeking opportunities to give thanks and recognize each other, and to work and live in harmony.

Openness
We are open to change, excited by new possibilities, and think outside our own boxes.

How we work

The approaches we bring to all interactions among and between our Board of Governors, Residents' Association, residents, leadership team, staff, volunteers and partners

We're collaborative.
We work together to strengthen our community, drawing on our combined skills and talents.

We communicate.
When information needs sharing, we share it in a timely way so we can move forward together.

We're evidence-informed.
We base our decisions on good information. When that doesn't exist or isn't readily available, we take the steps needed to gather it for ourselves.

We're disciplined.
We're focused and realistic — clear about our intended outcomes and our respective roles in working to achieve them.

We're confidential.
We respect people's right to privacy — and our legal obligations to provide it — and take all necessary measures to ensure it is protected.

We're a registered charity.
UHO was founded in a spirit of giving and draws on community support as a registered charity to fulfill its vision and mission.

Our strategic areas of focus

Where we'll direct our energies in the next five years

We approach the next five years aware of the unique complexities in our environment. Some of our residents require financial support while others do not. Some need care and living supports, but not all. Our campus is changing. We need to nurture our existing partnerships and possibly consider new ones to meet emerging needs. To fulfill our mission, we must ensure our long-term financial sustainability and the integrity of our physical infrastructure.

These contextualizing factors have led us to identify four strategic areas of focus:

1) Sustaining access to affordable, supportive housing
2) Supporting people as they age
3) Reimagining our future on campus
4) Ensuring a strong, adaptive foundation for UHO

All are tightly interrelated, depending on and supporting each other in an integrated strategic framework as the graphic below illustrates.



Sustaining access to affordable and supportive housing

Affordable housing for older adults is core to our vision and mission. We welcome people of different economic means and leverage our collective assets to benefit all who live at UHO. We believe mixed housing is more successful than subsidized housing alone. While that conviction is supported by research, there can be confusion about our mixed model — which, among other things, can complicate fundraising. To uphold our affordability commitment, we need to be financially sustainable over the long term.

Outcomes we intend to pursue:

- A stable balance between affordability and financial sustainability.
- A clear and common understanding of what is required to ensure inclusion and affordability.
- A streamlined approach to managing UHO's waiting list(s) that meets the needs and expectations of the organization and prospective residents.
- Greater capacity to raise funds to fulfill UHO's mission.

Supporting people as they age

Part of what makes UHO unique is our combination of apartments for independent older adults and supportive care services for those who need them — sustaining a vibrant, active community where residents have access to a continuum of care and support. As people live longer and move into UHO later, how we support that continuum, who provides which levels of care, and how services are paid for are all questions to be answered. We also recognize the need for greater clarity about how we can manage and support people's transitions to higher levels of care while respecting their privacy and autonomy, protecting their safety, and mitigating risk.

Outcomes we intend to pursue:

- Clear, evidence-informed understanding of UHO residents' care and support needs and expectations — and which of those can be feasibly met.
- Enhanced access to quality care and support that aligns with residents' needs as well as UHO's legal, financial and physical/infrastructural realities.
- Strong partnerships that enable equitable, consistent access to quality care and support.
- Clear parameters and processes to guide decisions about transitions to higher levels of care, whether or not those levels are available at UHO.

Reimagining our future on campus

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, UHO's founding organization and landlord, is evolving its campus in collaboration with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and developer Theia Partners. The City of Ottawa has approved the plan, intended for completion in 2028. While there is uncertainty about this change — and concerns about safety and quality of life — it may also be an opportunity to expand and enrich the 'UHO family' through new relationships. UHO wants to take an empowered, proactive role in reimagining its future on campus.

Outcomes we intend to pursue:

- Residents adapt successfully to the redeveloped campus and community.
- UHO works to maximize the benefits of redevelopment for its community.
- Residents are safe — and feel safe — both as the campus is redeveloped and afterward.
- UHO and its campus partners work collaboratively in the interests of the whole "village".
- An assured ability to sustain future generations on campus.

Ensuring a strong, adaptive foundation for UHO

UHO's strengths are plain to see. Residents work together and with staff to plan activities, outings, community events, fundraising and more. UHO's Board of Governors and management engage with the Residents Association to help establish UHO's future course with a shared commitment to ensuring UHO remains a great place to live. Going forward, it will be key to deepen these collaborations and strike the right balance of structure and flexibility — to be disciplined and effective while remaining adaptive as circumstances change.

Outcomes we intend to pursue:

- Clear systems and processes are in place so that all members of the UHO community can contribute effectively within the scope of their roles.
- Proven organizational capacity to be nimble and adapt to strategic challenges and opportunities.
- A working environment that attracts and helps retain staff and volunteers.
- Financial viability to serve more people over the long term.