

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

Housing York Inc.
June 16, 2011
Report of the
General Manager

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that the Board of Directors endorse the proposed approach to the development of a strategic plan for Housing York Inc.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides the Board of Directors with an overview of the proposed strategic planning process for Housing York Inc. (Housing York) and asks for endorsement of an integrated engagement process.

3. BACKGROUND

Since first formed on January 1, 2003 through the amalgamation of the former York Regional Housing Authority (public housing) and the Region of York Housing Corporation (municipal non-profit), Housing York has experienced considerable growth. Housing York has assumed ownership of three former community-owned housing sites: Abel Avenue, Woodbridge, in the City of Vaughan, Trinity Square and most recently Thornhill Green, in the Town of Markham, as well as the Blue Door Shelter site in the Town of East Gwillimbury. Housing York is also the owner of three new affordable housing projects, Armitage Gardens in the Town of Newmarket, Blue Willow Terrace in the City of Vaughan and Tom Taylor Place in the Town of Newmarket. With the completion of Mapleglen Residences in the City of Vaughan, the expansion of Kingview Court, King City, in the Township of King and Mackenzie Green in the Town of Richmond Hill, Housing York will have grown from 1,693 units at amalgamation to 2,341 units.

Housing York's operations have grown, not only in size, but also in complexity, serving an increasingly diverse and complex tenant population within an evolving regulatory context. As such, provision has been made for a strategic planning exercise to update its long term direction and to guide operational decisions.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

An interactive approach to development of the Strategic Plan will involve Board Members, Housing York tenants, community stakeholders and staff

Working with the Randolph Group, a management consulting firm specializing in strategy, organization and business planning for public and not-for-profit sector clients, a framework has been developed to guide the process.

The strategic planning process will provide clarity and focus to future directions, and support the development of operational strategies for the organization for the next five years (2012 to 2017).

A Steering Committee of senior staff will work with our consultants to lead the process and to provide the background information needed to support the discussions, describe Housing York today, the planning process being laid out and the key questions to be explored.

Process will be launched by a series of Board briefings during the monthly Board meetings, over approximately four months

Key areas that might be considered as subjects of Board briefings could include the variety of strategic issues facing Housing York and other housing providers, including for example:

- **Roles:** What roles should the housing corporation play in the future? (e.g. caring landlord, neighbourhood builder, developer, etc.)
- **People:** Who will the tenants of the future be and how will their needs be different? (e.g. implications of demographic trends such as aging and increasing cultural diversity)
- **Programs:** What programs and services should Housing York be providing directly and indirectly (through internal and external partnerships) to support its tenants? What are the implications of emerging provincial housing strategies for Housing York?
- **Portfolio:** How should Housing York's portfolio evolve in the future in terms of sustainability, intensification, new development etc.?
- **Funding:** What are the implications of existing funding programs for Housing York's future, and what approaches can/should be taken for future funding?
- **Structures and Systems:** What structures and systems need to be put in place to ensure effective governance, management and ongoing operations of Housing York? (e.g. governance and advisory structures, communications systems)

It is proposed that the series of Board briefings would begin in the fall.

Tenant and stakeholder focus groups would follow the Board discussion series

It is proposed that focus groups would be conducted with a number of groups including the following:

- Tenant Reference Group
- Four geographically-based tenant groups (e.g. north, south, west and east)
- Community partners
- Staff
- Corporate partners within York Region
- Members of Regional Council

These focus groups would probe views on Housing York's current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as views on the future roles Housing York should play, and how its programs and services may need to evolve in the future to meet changing needs.

Concurrent research will support the process and participants in the process

Research and information gathering will ensure that participants have access to information about sector trends and emerging best practices, as well as environmental factors that may influence discussion. A Planning Workbook would be developed for participants that will include:

- Trends Affecting Housing Organizations
- Trends Affecting York Region and Housing Needs (e.g. projected demographics)
- Housing York Inc. Today (i.e. people, portfolio, programs, structures and systems)
- Questions for Discussion

The Housing York Strategic Plan will align with relevant Regional strategies

The Housing York Strategic Plan will be informed by other Regional strategies such as the Sustainability Strategy, Vision 2051 and the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan to ensure that established principles are consistently applied. The Housing York Strategic Plan will be developed in tandem with the Housing and Homelessness plan the Region will be preparing in accordance with the requirements of the provincial *Housing Services Act, 2011* and the ongoing implementation of the department's Multi-Year Plan.

A visioning workshop for the Board and senior staff will be held following the series of Board discussions, the focus groups, and completion of research activities, and culminate in a planning document

A visioning workshop will be held, involving the Board and key members of the management team. The objective would be to:

- Reflect on the implications of the information presented in the Workbook
- Develop a shared understanding of Housing York's current strategic situation
- Develop long term directions
- Draft potential strategic objectives/themes to be addressed over the plan horizon (e.g. 2012 to 2017)
- Support preparation of a Planning Document that would lead to a Strategy Development Workshop

A Strategy Development Workshop would provide the opportunity to review the planning document and map out strategies towards desired outcomes

A Strategy Development Workshop involving both the Board and the staff Steering Committee would allow the opportunity to:

- Review the high-level planning document
- Develop more detailed outcomes to be achieved over the plan horizon (e.g. 2011 to 2016)
- Draft high-level strategies to achieve the outcomes
- Provide input into a final draft of the plan to be presented to the broader community

The workshop would involve the Steering Committee, members of the management team and members of the Board as desired.

Reviewing the final plan using a Town Hall format in a modern context will allow all of the participants to engage in the process

The final draft plan will be prepared in a form that can be shared with the Housing York community both electronically and in a Town Hall style meeting. Opportunities will be provided for the community to provide feedback electronically and through a facilitated process at the Town Hall. Results of the review process would then be summarized and brought back to the Board.

The process would culminate in the presentation of the final plan to the Board for their approval.

Table 1 shows a summary of the Strategic Plan timelines.

Table 1
Strategic Plan Timelines

Strategic Plan Process	Timelines
Board Briefing/Discussion Series	September to December 2011
Tenant and Stakeholder Focus Groups	January and February 2012
Visioning Workshop	March 2012
Strategy Development Workshop	April 2012
Plan Reviews/Town Halls	May 2012
Final Plan Approval	Fall 2012

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The strategic planning exercise is incorporated in the Housing York business plan and budget

The 2011 Housing York budget includes \$50,000 to support the strategic planning exercise. Costs are expected to include consulting services as well as the costs normally associated with community consultation exercises.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Housing York owns housing communities in every municipality in the Region. The strategic planning exercise will support long term planning for housing services across our local communities.

7. CONCLUSION

As contemplated in the 2011 Budget and Business Plan, Housing York will undertake a strategic planning exercise to revisit the Corporation's directions and to set strategic objectives for the next five years. This report provides an overview of the proposed strategic planning framework and sets out a proposed approach to engagement in the process.

For more information on this report, please contact Sylvia Patterson, Assistant General Manager, at Ext. 2091.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Recommended by:

Approved for Submission:

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June 2, 2011
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