

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

Housing York Inc.
June 20, 2012
Report of the
General Manager

HOUSING SERVICES ACT, 2011 **IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING YORK INC.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that the Board of Directors approve the proposed approach to implementing the requirements in the *Housing Services Act, 2011* as outlined in this report.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides the Board of Directors with an overview of the requirements in the *Housing Services Act, 2011* that impact Housing York Inc. (Housing York) and proposes an approach to ensuring compliance.

3. BACKGROUND

In November 2010, the Province announced its Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (the Strategy), initiating significant changes to the housing system in Ontario. In implementing the Strategy, the Province has introduced the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, replaced the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* with the new *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) and is engaged in consolidating provincially funded homelessness and shelter programs. A separate Council report will be provided summarizing the current implementation status of the Strategy and the implications for the Region as the Service Manager.

Generally speaking, the new legislation replaces the prescriptive *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000* regime with a more outcomes based framework. Program fundamentals, however, remain the same. There is no change to the funding formula and no significant changes to the relationship between the Region as program funder/administrator and housing providers as owner/ operators.

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, 2011 require the Region in its Service Manager capacity to develop and implement 10 year plans for the housing and homelessness system. A separate Council report will be provided

outlining the proposed approach to developing the Plan. Housing York will be included in the housing provider consultation process.

Housing York as an owner of public and non-profit housing has legislative responsibilities under the HSA that must be addressed.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Housing York as a public housing provider is required to submit a capital plan to the Service Manager

With respect to capital plans the HSA increases the requirement for annual capital plans to multi-year capital plans for the public housing portfolio. Housing York's current practice of preparing and updating detailed three and 10-year capital plans annually, as well as preparing an annual capital budget for Board approval, exceeds the HSA requirement.

Following Board approval, the annual capital budget is forwarded to the Service Manager, as required under the HSA.

Housing providers must implement training plans for staff

The HSA establishes new requirements for all housing providers to implement training plans for staff and volunteers involved in the operation of housing projects and to create a succession plan for the board of directors.

The staff who support Housing York are Regional employees whose services are provided pursuant to a management agreement between Housing York and the Region. The management services agreement should be updated to reflect the HSA requirements and has already been raised as an item needing attention through the Housing York strategic planning exercise.

The Region already provides a range of training options for staff and volunteers that support Housing York. Training initiatives include:

- Individual staff learning and development plans
- Corporate Learning programs
- Issue specific training provided in partnership with the Learning and Development Services Branch of the Community and Health Services Department (e.g. Alzheimer's, cultural competence and exceptional customer service.)
- External training opportunities, on-line courses, forums and conferences offered by housing sector organizations such as the Ontario Non- Profit Housing Association, the Institute of Housing Management and the Housing Services Corporation

Although the training currently provided fulfills the HSA requirements, management is developing a comprehensive training and development plan to ensure that staff are well positioned to respond to the increasing complexities of the tenant population and evolving building technologies.

Housing providers must implement succession plans for directors

The HSA requires housing providers to develop and implement succession plans for their boards of directors. Many non-profit housing corporations are governed by long serving board members. Effective succession plans will ensure sustainable long term governance.

As the Housing York Board of Directors is comprised of elected officials who serve on the Community and Health Services Committee, a regular succession of directors occurs every four years as part of the municipal elections. The current practice meets the requirements established in the HSA.

Housing York anticipates opportunities to work with the Region as Service Manager

Housing York is successfully meeting the requirements established in the HSA. Going forward Housing York will work with the Region as Service Manager to help inform the Region's 10 year housing and homelessness system plan by participating in the housing provider consultation process and identifying opportunities to enhance existing policies and procedures. Housing York will also continue to support Regional initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Housing York will be impacted if the Region changes local rules. For example, if the Region creates new waiting list priority categories, Housing York will be required to house priority applicants and to manage any associated tenant support implications with existing resources. (e.g. a priority for applicants with serious health issues could result in an increase in requests for unit modifications to accommodate tenant needs.)

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The identified requirements outlined in this report do not have significant financial implications to Housing York.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Housing York owns and operates residential rental housing in all nine local municipalities. The new HSA requirements are system wide and are in the infancy stages of implementation. Housing York recognizes that the Region as Service Manager has the authority to implement local policy that may have an effect on residents.

Housing York looks forward to working with the Service Manager to identify and implement any local policies, while continuing to provide a high level of client support to the residents.

7. CONCLUSION

At this early stage of HSA implementation, Housing York is successfully meeting the legislative requirements.

Housing York welcomes the opportunity to work with the Region as Service Manager to help inform the formation of the 10-year housing and homelessness plan.

For more information on this report, please contact Sylvia Patterson, Assistant General Manager, Housing and Long-Term Care at Ext.2091.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Recommended by:

Approved for Submission:

Sylvia Patterson
Assistant General Manager

Adelina Urbanski
General Manager

May 16, 2012

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