

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

Housing York Inc.
October 10, 2007
Report of the
General Manager

HOUSING YORK INC. EMERGENCY POWER PLAN UPDATE

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs the Board of Directors on the progress that has been made to implement Housing York Inc.'s Emergency Power Plan approved by the Board on December 8, 2004.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 2003 power outage results in a Housing York Inc Emergency Power Plan

The wide spread power outage that occurred in August 2003 provided an opportunity to examine the operation of the Housing York Inc. (HYI), housing portfolio in a long term power outage situation. While all the buildings complied with existing regulatory requirements, the long term power outage created situations that seriously challenged residents, particularly senior citizens and those who were frail and/or physically challenged. As a result, the Board approved an Emergency Power Plan in 2004 that would result in improved performance during local or wide-spread power outages.

3.2 The plan's recommendations

The recommendations were as follows:

- All buildings be equipped to have the capacity to operate the emergency lighting and fire exit signage for a minimum of one hour.
- Any building over four stories be equipped with emergency generator power to operate the emergency lighting, fire alarm system and permit at least one elevator to operate on a continuing basis during a power outage.

- In circumstances where buildings of four stories or less, house a significant portion of residents designated as frail, elderly or physically challenged the elevators should also have the capacity of being powered on an ongoing basis by an emergency generator.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Progress in 2005

In 2005, the first stage of the multi-year upgrade was completed with the upgrading of emergency lighting battery packs in seven buildings to permit at least one hour of emergency lighting before battery failure. The coupling of this initiative with the installation of energy saving exit lighting in these locations permitted many of the buildings to significantly exceed the one hour expectation.

4.2 Decision to acquire natural gas generators in 2006

The 2006 phase called for the installation of fixed generators at Keswick Gardens (43 The Queensway, Town of Georgina) and Maplewood Place (71 Dunlop Street, Town of Richmond Hill). Early in the year the *Ontario Building Code*, *Ontario Fire Code* and other related legislation were undergoing changes to allow the use of natural gas generators as opposed to diesel fuelled generators in multi-unit residential buildings.

Natural gas has significant advantages over the use of diesel fuel (quieter, less vibration, smaller, unlimited fuel supply, no fuel storage tanks, etc.). Therefore, it was decided to advance the installation of portable generators at four buildings to 2006 and rescheduled the two fixed generator installations/replacements to 2007 when all the code changes will be in place to permit the use of natural gas.

In 2006, portable generator power was provided to four buildings at a cost of \$76,323:

- Northview Court – 40 units (39 North Street, Town of Georgina)
- Pineview Terrace – 49 units (190 Church Street, Town of Georgina)
- Evergreen Terrace – 56 units (75 Dunlop Street, Town of Richmond Hill)
- Elmwood Gardens – 51 units (325 Elm Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville)

These portable generators will operate the fire alarm systems and emergency lighting as well as provide power to the recreation rooms.

4.3 New target dates and revised costs

The overall target completion date of 2010 to implement the Emergency Power Plan recommendations remains unchanged.

A revised installation schedule is attached (*see Attachment 1*) indicating new target dates for the balance of the installations as well as the revised budget estimates for 2007 reflecting the incremental cost for conversion to natural gas.

A consultant is preparing the specifications required to install fixed generators at Keswick Gardens (120 units) and Maplewood Place (80 units). However, because natural gas generators are new to a multi-residential environment, it is difficult to estimate the cost. The original estimate of \$230,000 to complete both buildings is expected to be insufficient. The estimate to complete Maplewood Place is now \$230,000, however currently a significant contingency is included. A tender will be issued for Maplewood Place and the budget implications re-evaluated once the actual cost is known. Staff will be seeking incentive funding to reduce costs.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The December 2004 Board report noted that this type of expenditure falls outside of the definition of capital costs and support was received to utilize retained earnings to fund the upgrades. The total value of work on completion was estimated at \$910,500 and funds were restricted as an Emergency Power Plan Reserve.

To date, we have used approximately \$76,323 from this reserve leaving a balance of \$834,177 in the Emergency Power Plan Reserve fund on December 31, 2006.

The 2007 approved budget included reserve spending in the amount of \$230,000.

As this multi-year project proceeds, costs will be monitored and staff will report back to the Board in future updates. Staff anticipate completing this phase of the Plan within the 2007 timeframe and will investigate possible incentive funding programs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The improvements to the fire safety systems as identified in the original report will result in all the fire safety systems within the Housing York Inc. apartment portfolio exceeding *Ontario Fire Code*, *Ontario Building Code* and local by-law requirements.

7. CONCLUSION

The five year program to upgrade emergency power at the 21 Housing York Inc. apartment complexes is proceeding as planned.

For more information on this report, contact Sylvia Patterson, Assistant General Manager, Housing York Inc., Housing Services Branch in the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Reviewed by:

Sylvia Patterson
Assistant General Manager

Recommended by:

Joann Simmons
General Manager

October 2, 2007

Attachment – 1

KM/SP/DN/sv

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