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SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST 2010 ANNUAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by Kerry Hobbs, Manager, Housing Administration; and**
- 2. Adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated March 24, 2011, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Chair write to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing encouraging the Province to continue to provide funding to support the development of affordable housing.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and to the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the demographic information about rent-geared-to-income (RGI) waiting list applicants and an overview of the 2010 waiting list activity.

3. BACKGROUND

Under the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000*, the Region is responsible to maintain a centralized waiting list for the RGI units in Regionally-funded social housing communities. The Region's Housing Access Unit processes RGI applications and adds eligible applicants to the waiting lists of the buildings of their choice. Applicants are eligible for the waiting list if they have legal status in Canada and do not owe money to a social housing provider. The Access Unit also updates each file annually to ensure that contact information is current.

When housing providers have RGI vacancies, they access the waiting list for their respective buildings through the Region's web-based waiting list system. Housing providers must offer their RGI vacancies to the highest ranked applicants on their waiting list. As part of the offer process, housing providers assess the applicant's current household income to ensure RGI eligibility. Applications are ranked chronologically based on the application date. Applicants with a special priority designation rank ahead of all chronological applicants. Special priority is a provincially mandated program that assists applicants who have been abused by a member of their household and need RGI housing to leave the abusive situation.

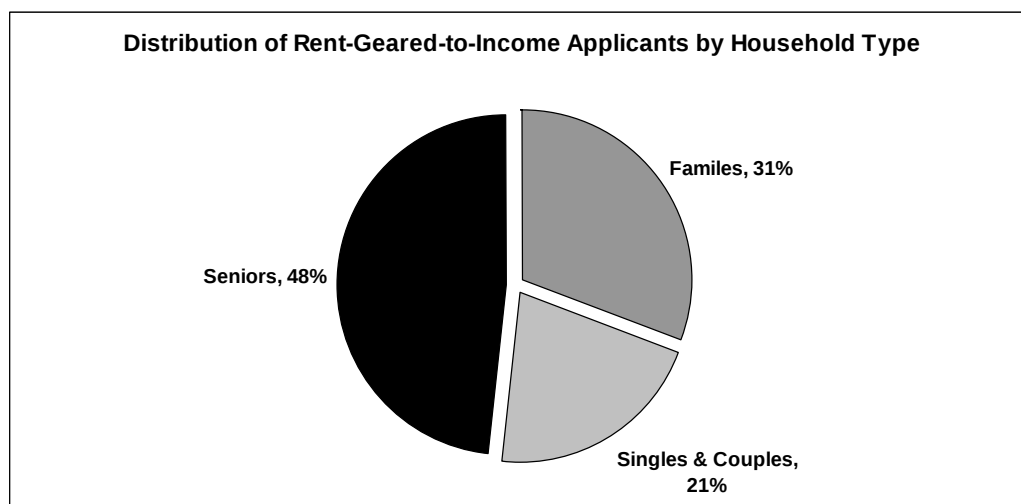
4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

WAITING LIST DATA PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PEOPLE WAITING FOR RGI HOUSING IN THE REGION

Almost half of applicant households are seniors

The waiting list is subdivided into three general categories: families, singles/couples, and seniors. Although the number of applicants on the waiting list changes from month to month, the distribution of applicants within the categories is relatively stable. As of December 31, 2010, there were 7,626 applicant households (about 15,000 people) on the waiting list. Chart 1 depicts distribution of RGI applicants by waiting list category.

Chart 1

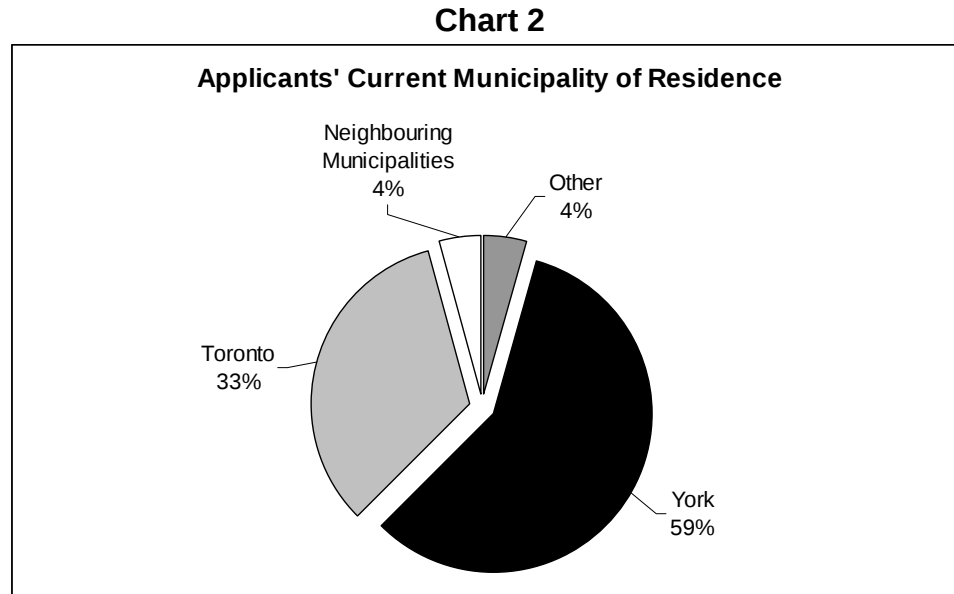


Most applicants already live in York Region

Although anyone with legal status in Canada can apply for housing in York Region, most applicants already live here. In total, 59% of applicants live in York Region while another

33% (2,547 applicants) reside in Toronto. Applicants can apply concurrently in multiple jurisdictions.

Approximately 3,484 or 5% of the 66,000 active households on Toronto's waiting list currently live in York Region. In 2010, 56 applicants from the City of Toronto were housed in York Region's social housing portfolio and 96 applicants from York Region were housed in Toronto's portfolio. Chart 2 shows applicants' current municipality of residence.



Most applicants are Canadian Citizens

Applicants must have legal status in Canada to be eligible for the waiting list. In total, 75% of primary household members are Canadian citizens; 23% have Permanent Resident status and 2% are Refugee Claimants.

WAITING LIST APPLICANTS FACE SERIOUS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ISSUES

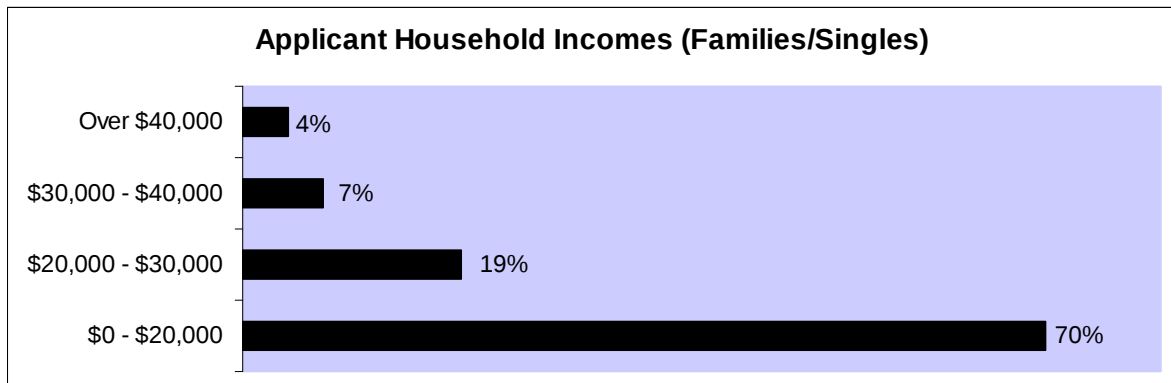
Housing affordability is typically defined as a housing cost that does not exceed 30% of household income. Using this measure, a household needs an annual income of \$37,400 to afford the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) average one-bedroom rent of \$934 in the Region. A family would need an income of \$46,400 to afford the average three-bedroom rent of \$1,159.

A York Region senior whose only income is Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, a total of \$15,227 per year, has to spend 74% of their gross income to pay the rent for a one-bedroom unit at the CMHC average market rent. A single parent

with 3 children working minimum wage 40 hours per week has to spend 65% of their gross income to pay the rent for a three-bedroom unit at the CMHC average market rent.

Approximately 70% of all waiting list applicants declared incomes of less than \$20,000 per year and a total of 89% have annual incomes below \$30,000. These households face serious affordability issues. Chart 3 illustrates the distribution of applicant household incomes.

Chart 3



324 HOUSEHOLDS WERE HOUSED FROM THE REGION'S RGI WAITING LIST IN 2010

The number of households housed in RGI units varies from year to year depending on a number of factors. Vacancies in seniors' buildings, for example, often have cyclical spikes when applicants who have aged in place concurrently reach the point where transfer to long-term care is required. Vacancies in non-senior buildings are more sensitive to economic factors, with fewer tenants moving out of their RGI units when the employment market is limited. Table 1 provides the details of the waiting list categories for all households placed in RGI housing from the Region's waiting list in 2010 in comparison to 2009.

Table 1
Applicants Housed in 2010 by Waiting List Category

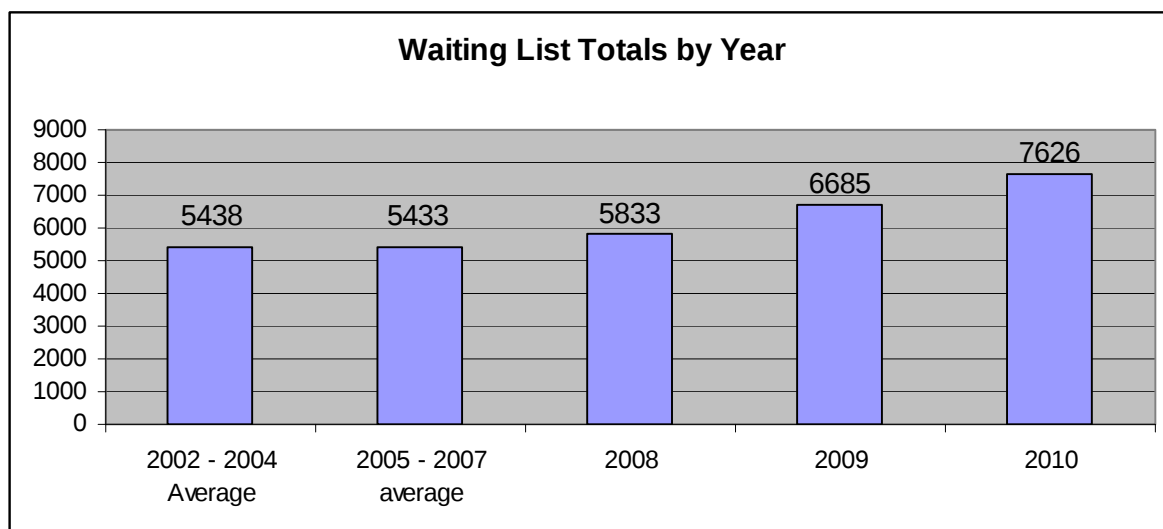
Waiting List Category	Applicants Housed 2010	Applicants Housed 2009
Families and Non-Seniors Singles/Couples	148	240
Seniors	134	161
Modified Units (units designed for wheelchair accessibility)	17	15
In-Situ Priority (eviction prevention program for market rent social housing households who experience significant, permanent income loss)	21	8
Over-housed (Provincial requirement giving preferred ranking to RGI households who must move to a smaller unit to maintain RGI eligibility)	4	6
TOTAL	324	430

WAITING LIST PRESSURES ARE AN ONGOING ISSUE

The need for RGI units continues to increase

For most of its history, the Region's waiting list was fairly stable, averaging about 5,400 applicant households in any given year. However, with the onset of the recession in late 2008 the waiting list began to climb. As of December 31, 2010, the number of households on the waiting list had increased by 40% over the pre-recession average.

Chart 4



The total number of applications on the waiting list varies primarily depending on the number of new applications received and the number of applications cancelled as part of the annual update process. The Housing Access Unit updates every application annually to ensure that contact information is up to date and that the applicants' housing needs are accurately reflected in the specific building waiting lists they have chosen. If an applicant does not respond to the annual update request, the application is cancelled. Cancelled applications are reinstated if the applicant provides the updated information within a year of cancellation. Table 2 outlines the waiting list activity in 2010.

Table 2
2010 Wait List Activity

Waiting List Applications	Totals
Total Waiting List as of December 2009	6,685
New Applications received	2,844
Ineligible and incomplete applications	-58
Cancelled Applications	-1,521
Applicants Housed	-324
Total Waiting List as of December 2010	7,626

THE WAIT TIMES FOR RGI HOUSING ARE AFFECTED BY MANY VARIABLES AND ARE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT

Waiting times for new applicants vary considerably depending on:

- Whether the applicant is eligible for special priority status (special priority applicants are housed before chronological applicants).
- Whether the applicant is eligible for dedicated seniors' buildings (seniors are typically housed faster than non-seniors).
- The unit size requested (the one-bedroom non-senior waiting lists are many years longer than any other category).

When asked to provide waiting times, the best information Housing Access Unit staff can provide is the year of application for the chronological applicants at the top of the list of the building or municipality in question. For example, the average wait time for seniors housed in the northern municipalities in 2010 was about five years. At the same time, there are one-bedroom non-senior applicants waiting for housing in the southern municipalities who have been on the waiting list since the early 1990's.

The special priority program has a major impact on wait times for non-senior chronological applicants, especially in the southern municipalities

Special priority is a provincially legislated program that ranks applicants who need RGI housing to enable them to leave an abusive relationship ahead of all other applicants.

Although seniors are eligible for special priority, only 6% of the seniors housed in 2010 had special priority status. Special priority is primarily a program that serves families and singles.

At any given time, special priority applicants account for 2% of the total waiting list. In 2010, 48% of all RGI vacancies in family and single buildings were filled by special priority households.

Special priority applicants seeking housing in the Region's central or northern municipalities are typically offered housing in three to six months whereas those requesting housing in the southern municipalities may wait three to twenty-four months, depending on the number of buildings they have chosen and whether or not they need one of the Region's limited one-bedroom units.

Because the need for RGI housing is most acute in the southern municipalities and special priority applicants are always at the top of the list, family housing providers in the Town of Richmond Hill, the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan house predominantly special priority households. Most housing providers in the southern municipalities rarely get to their chronological lists. The results are ever increasing waiting times for applicants who do not have special priority status.

Seniors can typically expect shorter waiting times than families or singles

Seniors have more social housing building choices available to them than do families or singles. Three of the Region's municipalities only have seniors housing and there are proportionately more seniors' RGI units than there are units for families and singles. As a result, seniors typically have shorter waiting times than families and singles.

The wait time is greatest for one-bedroom non-senior units

There continues to be an acute need for one-bedroom non-senior units across the Region. There are about 600 non-senior one-bedroom units in the Region. As of December 31, 2010, there were over 1,500 applicants on the one-bedroom non-senior waiting list. Some of these applicants have been waiting since the 1990's. In 2010, 41 applicants were housed into one-bedroom non-seniors units and of these, 21 were housed in a newly opened affordable housing building participating in the Regionally-funded rent assistance program. For many one-bedroom applicants, the reality is that they are unlikely to be housed until they are old enough to qualify for a seniors building.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The shortage of affordable rental housing in general and RGI housing in particular creates financial pressures in many areas. The Region is working to address these needs through the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) and the Regionally-funded rent

supplement program. The Region has been very successful in obtaining federal/provincial AHP funding. The AHP proposal calls typically have very little lead time and very tight development timeframes. As a result of Council's on-going commitment to new housing development the Region is well positioned to respond to funding opportunities and to leverage that funding to maximize local program implementation.

The first new building under this program, Tony Wong Place, a 120 unit apartment building, opened in the Town of Markham in July. Three more affordable housing buildings with a total of 243 new units constructed under Wave 1 of the AHP will open this year. An additional four buildings with a total of 208 units are in development under the AHP extension with projected completion from 2010 through 2012. Table 3 details the status of the AHP buildings.

Table 3
New Affordable Housing Program

Building	# of Units	Status
Tony Wong Place	120	Opened in 2010
Anand Bhavan Seniors Home	25	Opened in 2010
Deafblind #1	4	Opened in 2010
Deafblind #2	4	Expected Completion: 2011
Mapleglen Residences (Housing York)	84	Expected Completion: 2011
Kingview Court Expansion (Housing York)	39	Expected Completion: 2011
Reena	60	Expected Completion: 2011
Mount Albert United Church Foundation	30	Expected Completion: 2011
Hesperus Fellowship Village	60	Expected Completion: 2012
Essex (Housing York)	140	Expected Completion: 2012
Total New Units	566	

With an annualized budget of \$1,000,000, the Regional rent supplement program will further increase the affordability of 130 - 140 of the AHP units. The Region has also introduced funding to provide transitional supports for special priority households, with a particular focus on providing resources in housing communities that for years now have predominantly housed victims of domestic violence.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Waiting list applicants live in every community in the Region. The applicant survey indicates that most of these people are struggling with serious financial hardship and that more than a third need help from the food banks to get by. The need for more affordable housing options is particularly acute in the southern municipalities.

The Region continues to explore opportunities for affordable housing development. By way of example, as noted in the capital budget proposal, staff are currently investigating options to redevelop and optimize an aging social housing community in Woodbridge in the City of Vaughan. Other funding and development opportunities are assessed as they are identified and will be the subject of further reports to Council.

7. CONCLUSION

As of December 31, 2010, there were 7,626 applicants on the waiting list for RGI housing in the Region. Of these, approximately half are seniors. With the exception of applicants with special priority status, all applicants can expect to wait years for housing. The waiting lists are longest for non-seniors awaiting one of the Region's scarce one-bedroom units. Most one-bedroom applicants won't be offered housing until they are old enough to qualify for seniors housing.

The Region continues to work toward increasing the supply of affordable and RGI housing, but serious waiting list pressures are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.



Social Housing Waiting List 2010 Annual Activity Update

Presentation to Community and
Health Services Committee

Kerry Hobbs
April 13, 2011

Slide 1

RGI Housing Waiting List

Overview

- ❑ Waiting list system overview
- ❑ Regionally funded RGI programs
- ❑ Waiting List Data & Analysis
- ❑ Social Housing OMBI measures
- ❑ Looking forward



Community and Health Services Committee April 13, 2011

Slide 2

Waiting List System Overview

- The Region's Housing Access Unit maintains the waiting list system and:
 - Responds to requests for information about the social housing and waiting list processes
 - Processes all new applications in accordance with Provincial rules and timelines
 - Updates every applicant file annually
 - Provides a building specific RGI waiting list for each housing provider

Waiting List System Overview

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Waiting List System Overview

- ❑ Housing providers must offer their RGI vacancies to the highest ranked applicants on the waiting list, unless:
 - ❑ The housing provider is a federally funded co-operative
 - ❑ The unit or housing provider serves special needs households and the applicant is selected by the related support service agency

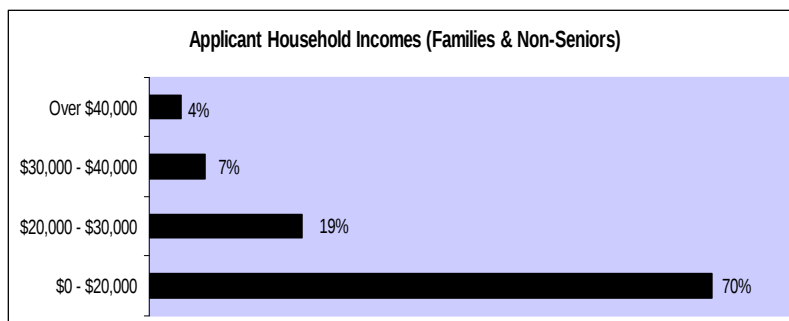
Social Housing Portfolio Overview

Program	Providers	RGI units	Total Units
Community Based Housing Providers	41	2620	4120
Housing York Inc.	1	1684	1977
Rent Supplement	29	334	334
TOTAL	71	4638	6431

The information in the table reflects buildings currently occupied and does not include those still in construction.

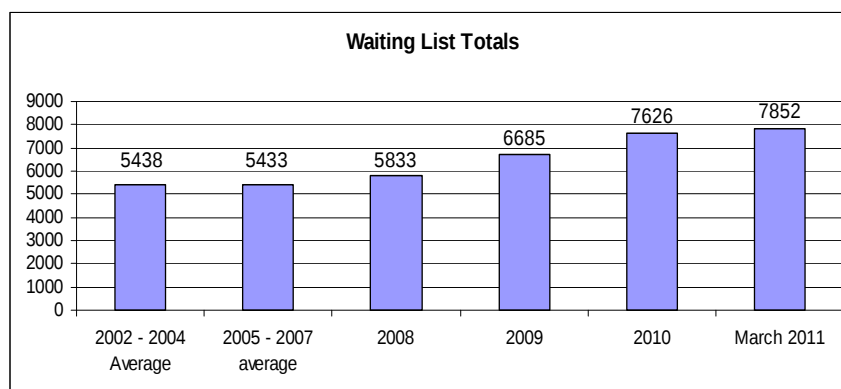
Waiting List Data & Analysis

Waiting List Applicants typically have very low incomes



Waiting List Data & Analysis

The Waiting List is increasing



Waiting List Data & Analysis

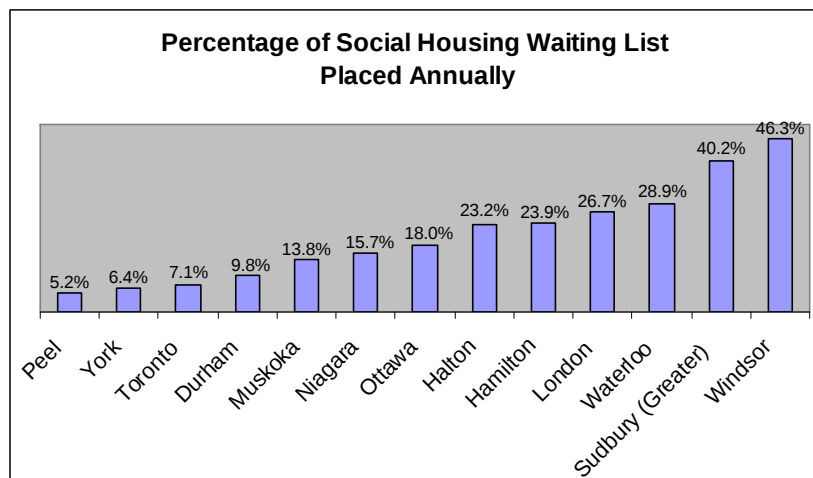
- The Waiting List increase can be attributed to:
 - Continued recessionary impacts
 - Population increases
 - The increase in low income households as a percentage of the York Region population

Waiting List Data & Analysis

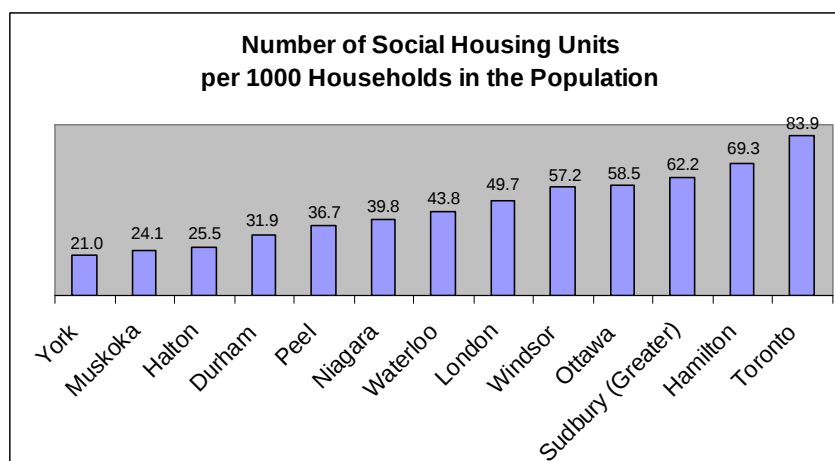
Wait times are increasing

- New applicants can reasonably expect to wait a number of years to be housed because:
 - the special priority policy significantly impacts housing opportunities for other applicants, and
 - the waiting list is growing much faster than the RGI housing supply

Social Housing 2009 OMBI Measures



Social Housing 2009 OMBI Measures



GTA Waiting List Comparison

Regional Municipality	Active Households		
	2008	2009	2010
Durham	3,650	3,992	3,926
Halton	1,906	1,888	1,931
Peel	13,564	13,328	14,436
York	5,564	5,833	6,685
City of Toronto	49,468	52,257	60,197
Total for Toronto Region	74,152	77,298	87,175
Total Household Increase from Previous Year	-	3,146	9,877

Source: Toronto Regional Housing Data Bank (NOTE: Data is collected in the first quarter of the year reported, rather than at year end. The 2010 data presented in the chart reflects the Region's waiting list at the end of 2009.)

Looking Forward

- ❑ 566 New Affordable Housing Units
- ❑ Awaiting announcement of Years 3-5 of the Affordable Housing Program
- ❑ Provincial Short Term Rent Support Program
- ❑ Multi Year Plan investments
- ❑ Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and development of the Region's Housing and Homelessness plan