

The Regional Municipality of York

Housing York Inc.
September 6, 2018

Report of the
General Manager

Endorsing York Region's Inclusion Charter

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Board endorse the Inclusion Charter for York Region (Attachment 1).

2. Purpose

This report seeks the Board's endorsement of the Inclusion Charter for York Region as recommended by York Region Council, and provides an update on Housing York Inc.'s related initiatives.

3. Background

In June 2018, Council endorsed the Inclusion Charter for York Region

York Region is one of Canada's most diverse and rapidly changing communities. Recent census data indicates that residents speak over 120 different languages and come from 230 distinct ethnic origins. The Community Partnership Council, a group that leads local strategies to welcome newcomers from around the world to York Region, identified that an inclusion charter model was as an effective way to respond positively to rapidly changing demographics within the Region.

The Inclusion Charter for York Region was developed over several years through extensive community consultations, guided through the efforts of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group. The group is co-chaired by York Region and York Regional Police and includes members of local municipalities, businesses and agencies.

Endorsing York Region's Inclusion Charter

The Charter embraces all dimensions of diversity and is grounded in the belief that our greatest strength is the ability to build communities that celebrate and value everyone's differences and contributions. In [June 2018](#), York Region Council endorsed the Inclusion Charter for York Region.

Housing York Inc.'s endorsement of the York Region Inclusion Charter supports the Region's commitment to making communities more welcoming and inclusive

The Inclusion Charter includes a common commitment to inclusion by a number of community partners including businesses, community organizations and agencies, municipalities, police services, hospitals, school boards, and conservation authorities. As a community partner, the Regional Municipality of York has developed and endorsed a commitment statement that promotes Council's commitment to inclusion in the community and the workplace. The [June 2018](#) report, Inclusion Charter for York Region, requested endorsement of the Inclusion Charter for York Region by its boards and corporations, including Housing York Inc. (Housing York).

By endorsing the Inclusion Charter (Attachment 1), Housing York will join a number of community partners with a common commitment to inclusion across the Region.

4. Analysis and Implications

Housing York's vision statement is aligned with the Region's Inclusion Charter

In [November 2017](#), the Housing York Board approved vision and mission statements to guide the implementation of Housing York's 2017 to 2020 multi-year plan and inform day-to-day operational decisions. Housing York's vision statement committed to the long-term goal to make Housing York communities more inclusive:

"A leader in affordable housing, building inclusive communities that everyone would be proud to call home."

Fostering inclusive communities and respecting diversity is an action under the Housing York's 2017-2020 Plan

[*Achieving New Heights through Innovation and Sustainability*](#), Housing York's multi-year plan outlines a number of strategic directions including "Strengthening Community Health." The development of a plan to respect diversity and foster inclusion in Housing York communities is an action under the plan.

Housing York released a Request for Proposal in June 2018 to assist with development of a Resident Inclusion Plan. The plan will help identify potential partners and resources to support Housing York in recognizing tenant diversity and fostering inclusive communities.

The plan will be informed through industry best practices and consultations with tenants, staff, and community partners. A staff resource guide will be created to further develop an organizational culture within Housing York focused on inclusion. The draft Resident Inclusion Plan is expected to be reported to the Board in the second quarter of 2019.

Inclusion activities are integrated into Housing York's ongoing work

Housing York undertakes a number of initiatives to promote inclusion in its communities. The goal of these initiatives is to affect positive change and to support residents so that they coexist respectfully with their neighbours in Housing York's increasingly diverse housing communities. A snapshot of these initiatives are listed below:

- Encouraging tenant engagement by providing language supports to gather feedback on policy issues such as parking and no smoking
- Using icons, pictures and plain language in new leases and in signage throughout Housing York buildings
- Providing a variety (size, location) of accessible and visitable unit layouts throughout the portfolio
- Coordinating on-site English as a Second Language instruction across several communities
- Partnering with support service agencies, such as the Canadian Hearing Society, to provide affordable housing so that residents can receive long-term supports where they live
- Bringing diverse ethno-cultural communities together through "Master Chef" food competitions
- Providing homes for households of different sizes and a variety of income levels
- Highlighting youth contributions to Housing York communities through the YOUthink campaign

5. Local Municipal Impact

With over 4,000 residents in 35 housing communities living in all nine local municipalities, Housing York will continue to encourage and support practices and activities that promote resident inclusivity in their homes.

6. Conclusion

Housing York strives to create communities that value the rich diversity of its residents. Initiatives, such as the Resident Inclusion Plan, will enhance existing operational practices to help achieve the Inclusion Charter's vision of York Region as a welcoming and inclusive community where diversity is celebrated, where residents can participate freely in society and live with respect, dignity, and free from discrimination. Through the endorsement of the Inclusion Charter for York Region, Housing York will reaffirm its commitment to fostering inclusive communities.

For more information on this report, please contact Rick Farrell, General Manager at 1-877-464-9675 ext.72091.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Recommended by:

Approved for Submission:

Rick Farrell
General Manager

Katherine Chislett
President

August 8, 2018

Attachment (1)

#8600903

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

INCLUSION CHARTER

OUR COMMITMENT
TO **WELCOMING** AND
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

The **Inclusion Charter for York Region** is a community initiative that brings together businesses, community organizations, municipalities, police services, hospitals, school boards, conservation authorities and agencies with a common commitment to create an inclusive environment with equality for all who work, live and play here. Together our organizations share the vision of York Region as a welcoming and inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and where everyone can develop to their full potential, participate freely in society and live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination.

The Charter reflects an evolving approach in support of existing federal and provincial legislation that promotes human rights and accessibility. By endorsing this Charter we affirm our commitment to inclusion, whereby all people feel they belong and have access to the same opportunities.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

Together with other participating organizations, The Regional Municipality of York is committed to taking action to achieve the vision of the Charter in our organization and in the community. The Region celebrates its growing and diverse population as a source of strength, vitality and economic opportunity. The Region's commitment to inclusion enhances our ongoing work to attract and retain the best talent, promote innovation and provide an excellent customer experience.

Endorsed by:

Wayne Emmerson
Chair and CEO

Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

This 28th day of June, 2018.

