

The Regional Municipality of York

Housing York Inc.
October 5, 2017

Report of the
General Manager

Updating Housing York Inc.'s Parking Pricing Policy

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Housing York Inc. update parking rates as detailed in Attachment 1.
2. The General Manager, Housing York, be authorized to adjust parking rates as part of the annual budget process.

2. Purpose

This report proposes a new parking pricing strategy for Housing York Inc. (Housing York) properties based on the property location's walkability and transit availability. The report also provides an overview of survey results conducted for housing communities experiencing parking supply challenges.

3. Background

Most Housing York communities have adequate parking to accommodate resident and visitor parking needs

A report to the Board on [June 15, 2017](#) provided an overview of parking provisions across Housing York properties. Housing York properties provide both resident and visitor parking. Each property also includes a number of unassigned accessible parking spaces.

Most family townhouse sites have a sufficient parking supply. On average, there are approximately 1.1 parking spaces for every townhouse unit. At most townhouse sites residents have access to private garages and driveways.

Seniors' apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s have fewer parking spaces than units. Housing programs at the time permitted only 0.5

parking spaces per senior's unit. Housing York has historically managed parking at these buildings by offering vacant units without parking if no spaces are available when the vacancy occurs. Applicants who choose to wait for a unit with parking typically wait longer than applicants who do not want a parking space.

New apartment buildings, such as Mackenzie Green and Armitage Gardens generally offer one parking space for every residential unit. The exception is the Richmond Hill Hub which has only 88 resident spaces for 202 residential units.

Housing York maintains waiting lists for parking at some properties

Some applicants accept a unit without a parking space and later request to be added to the parking wait list. These requests are accommodated when an existing resident gives up a parking space.

The [June 15, 2017](#) report to the Board described specific parking pressures in four Housing York communities: Fairy Lake Gardens in the Town of Newmarket; Founders Place in the Town of Newmarket; Thornhill Green in the City of Markham; and Richmond Hill Hub in the Town of Richmond Hill. Housing York has addressed resident concerns at Founders Place and Fairy Lake Gardens by allocating recent parking vacancies to visitors parking. The parking waiting list at Thornhill Green is specific to families requesting second parking spaces. Housing York is addressing these requests as space permits.

The Richmond Hill Hub is currently the only site where resident requests for parking cannot be addressed with the existing supply of parking spaces. Efforts to secure additional parking spaces in neighbouring properties have not been successful and Housing York continues to partner with York Region Transit to encourage transit use. As the property is located on Yonge Street, in an area that is well-served by transit and with retail and other services in close proximity; an increase in parking rates, as proposed later in this report, may mitigate demand.

4. Analysis and Implications

Housing York surveyed residents to better understand their transportation needs and priorities

Housing York developed a resident survey in collaboration with York Region Transit. The survey included questions on parking pressures and costs.

Staff assisted residents in completing on-site surveys. To encourage greater participation from all residents, surveys were offered in multiple languages, including English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Farsi. Staff encouraged residents to

complete comment cards to gather qualitative feedback on parking and transit matters. Highlights of the survey include:

- Approximately 70% of survey respondents at Fairy Lake Gardens and 60% of Founders Place respondents were satisfied with their current parking arrangements.
- Residents living at Fairy Lake Gardens and Founders Place are more likely to take transit to carry out their day-to-day activities over any other form of transportation; Richmond Hill Hub residents are more likely to use a car.
- Reasons for not taking transit include: preferring car ownership, length of travel time to destinations, and not knowing how to use transit.

Richmond Hill Hub residents identified significant parking concerns

The survey results indicated that over 75% of Richmond Hill Hub respondents have parking concerns. Lack of resident and visitor parking were the top two parking concerns. Resident survey responses at the Hub indicated a desire for more information on transit options. Housing York will continue to partner with York Region Transit to provide transit information to residents.

Staff organized a post-survey focus group with Richmond Hill Hub residents to discuss the survey results and assess price sensitivity. At the focus group meeting, residents were asked whether they would want a space if parking were free. Residents said that even if they did not own a car, they would want a dedicated parking space for their guests or just in case they needed parking in the future. Richmond Hill residents who are waiting for parking indicated a willingness to pay more than the \$40 per month currently charged for underground parking spaces.

Housing York's parking charges are comparable to those of other non-profit housing providers

Housing York's current parking rates range from a low of \$10 per month for surface parking in the north, to a high of \$40 per month for underground parking in the south. Comparative research with non-profit housing providers across the Region and in other Greater Toronto Area municipalities indicates that Housing York's current charges are similar to other non-profit housing providers. Most housing providers charge at least a modest fee for parking. Rates vary, depending on whether the building is in a higher density community. Housing providers typically charge a premium for underground parking.

Resident parking charges cover about 60 per cent of the cost of parking services

Parking revenues do not cover the cost of parking services. In 2016, parking revenues were approximately \$245,000 and parking service costs for the same period were approximately \$394,000. These costs include parking lot cleaning, snow removal and parking control contract fees. Resident charges do not contribute to the cost of creating or substantially repairing parking spaces.

Car dependency is an important consideration in determining a parking fee structure

The Region's official plan and transit investments emphasize the importance of moving from a car dependent culture to transit oriented communities. The expectation is that over time, as transit options increase, car dependency will decline. For many people though, the transition away from car ownership is difficult. The convenience of using a personal vehicle may outweigh the costs of ownership, particularly for families with young children. Some seniors continue to pay parking and vehicle ownership costs for cars that rarely leave the parking lot, perhaps because giving up a vehicle is associated with a loss of independence.

In recommending a parking fee structure, Housing York has strived to balance the "want" for parking and the "need" for parking. As noted in the Richmond Hill Hub focus groups, if parking were free, everyone would "want" a space. Not everyone, however, "needs" a vehicle to manage their day to day activities. While Housing York wants to ensure that parking charges are affordable to residents who need a vehicle, it is not intended to incent car ownership by excessively subsidizing parking.

Parking charges can be updated to better reflect Housing York properties' proximity to amenity and transit services

Housing York's parking charges have evolved over time. The oldest buildings in the portfolio historically did not offer reserved parking spaces and there were no charges for use of the spaces provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees for newer buildings were established building by building as part of the development process. In the report to the Board on [May 1, 2014](#), the Board approved a reserved parking policy for the oldest buildings. The policy enabled tenants to rent a space for their exclusive use. Rates were harmonized based on geography, with surface parking rates of \$10 per month in the northern municipalities, \$20 per month in the central municipalities and \$25 per month in the southern municipalities.

In 2016, the Region entered into an agreement with Walk Score Inc., an organization that provides comparative information on walkability and transit service. The walkability or Walk Score® measures pedestrian friendliness, for

example, distance between intersections for safe road crossing and proximity of amenities such as retail, grocery stores, schools, parks, etc. The Transit Score® measures the availability and frequency of public transit service. The Region can access the data in detail to confirm that the information reflects current transit investments.

The availability of Walk Score® information now enables a more nuanced approach to setting parking charges that reflects the walkability and transit score for specific housing communities. Locations well serviced by transit and with amenities located within walking distance could pay a higher parking rate than locations that are more car dependent, as the tenants would not be unduly burdened by having to not own a car.

The proposed parking rates, as outlined in Table 1, would apply to all new requests for parking. Some of the properties in the northern parts of the Region will experience an increase of \$10 per month to harmonize the parking fee with other similarly served properties in the Housing York portfolio. The best located sites that are somewhat walkable or very walkable and served by transit would also experience a rate increases. To mitigate some of the higher costs associated with the provision of underground and deck parking, and to reflect the enhanced value to residents, a premium in addition to the parking fee of \$30 a month is proposed for underground parking and \$15 for deck parking.

Attachment 1 provides a detailed list of each housing communities' locational description using Transit and Walk Score® data along with associated parking rates.

**Table 1
Proposed Parking Rates for Housing Communities based on Walk Score®
and Transit Score® Location Descriptions**

Walk Score® Transit Score® Property Location Descriptor	Proposed Parking Fee	Examples of Housing Communities
Very walkable with good or some transit	\$30	Properties on Yonge Street and on Regional Corridors, mixed use communities
Car dependent/somewhat walkable with minimal or some transit	\$20	Somewhat mixed use communities, low to medium density communities
Parking Premiums – Additional Costs to Parking Rates		
Underground parking space premium	\$30	Total parking charge of \$60 for an underground space at the Richmond

Walk Score® Transit Score® Property Location Descriptor	Proposed Parking Fee	Examples of Housing Communities
		Hill Hub
Deck parking space premium	\$15	Total parking charge of \$35 for deck parking at Lakeside residences in Georgina

5. Financial Considerations

The proposed parking pricing increases will apply to new parking space allocations. The net impact of the proposed parking pricing policy represents a modest increase per month. The proposed rate change will not materially impact parking revenues. It is also recommended that the General Manager be authorized to adjust parking rates as part of the annual business plan budget cycle to ensure that rates remain current over time.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Regional and local planning policies direct parking policy for new development. Each local municipality has zoning by-laws that establish the number of parking spaces required at each new site. Parking requirements vary by municipality based on a number of factors such as the availability of alternative forms of transportation and local community standards. Land use planning policies are moving communities towards a future vision of less car-reliance and greater use of transit. Reducing parking supply makes better use of available land and supports that future vision. Housing York’s operational challenge is that while transitioning towards a less car dependent future, many of the tenants in the communities today drive personal vehicles and expect that parking will be available to them and their guests.

Future Housing York communities currently under development have parking ratios that reflect demand in existing Housing York buildings. The Woodbridge mixed-use redevelopment proposes 162 units and 198 parking spaces, with 148 of those spaces proposed for resident use. The Unionville redevelopment as currently proposed contemplates a similar parking ratio.

New buildings will be planned with a similar parking ratio as Woodbridge and Unionville, but final design of buildings and parking lots will be refined through the formal planning process with each municipality. It is anticipated that the final parking requirements at each new building will complement applicable Regional

and local planning policies, and be informed by the existing neighborhood context and proximity to levels of transit investment.

7. Conclusion

Housing York provides parking options for residents and visitors across its housing communities. Current parking management strategies work well to manage parking demand across most of Housing York's properties. A resident survey was conducted for housing communities experiencing parking challenges to identify ways to mitigate those challenges. Staff will continue to work with York Region Transit to further support residents living at the Richmond Hill Hub.

While low-cost parking encourages car reliance and increased demand for parking, limited access to transit and amenities within walking distance of several Housing York communities leave residents with fewer options to meet their transportation needs. A modest increase of parking rates in communities with good access to transit and high walkability will better reflect transportation opportunities.

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

September 20, 2017

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Attachment (1)

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

Attachment 1

Current and Proposed Parking Charges for Housing York Locations Based on Walk Score® and Transit Score®			
Descriptions			
Property Name	Municipality	Current Monthly Parking Rate (\$) Surface/Underground	Proposed Monthly Parking Rate (\$) surface/underground
Car Dependent/Somewhat Walkable and Minimal/Some Transit			
Nobleview Pines	King	20	20
East Court	Georgina	10	20
Hadley Grange	Aurora	20	20
Kingview Court	King	20	20
North View Court	Georgina	10	20
Keswick Gardens	Georgina	10	20
Oxford Village	East Gwillimbury	20	20
Elmwood Gardens	Whitchurch-Stouffville	20	20
Glenwood Mews	Georgina	10	20
Pineview Terrace	Georgina	10	20
Lakeside Residences	Georgina	10/25	20/35
Heritage East	Newmarket	20/30	20/50
Tom Taylor Place	Newmarket	20	20
Fairy Lake Gardens	Newmarket	20	20
Armitage Gardens	Newmarket	20	20
Somewhat Walkable/Very Walkable and Some/Good Transit			
Founders Place	Newmarket	20	30
Mackenzie Green	Richmond Hill	40	60
Rosetown	Richmond Hill	25	30
Mapleglen Residences	Vaughan	25	30
Orchard Heights Place	Aurora	20	30
Thornhill Green	Markham	25/35	30/60
Richmond Hill Hub	Richmond Hill	20/40	30/60
Blue Willow Terrace	Vaughan	25	30
Dunlop Properties	Richmond Hill	25	30