



Community and Health Services Department  
Housing York Inc.

## Memorandum

To: Members of the Housing York Inc. Board of Directors  
From: Rick Farrell  
General Manager  
Date: November 3, 2016  
Re: **Housing Operations – Monthly Activity Update**

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This Housing Operations update provides highlights of progress made against the 2016 Business Plan. It includes a summary of key events and progress on the Richmond Hill Hub including the Social Enterprise space; site activities in September and October 2016; tenant engagement actions; and a financial status update.

### Awards

#### **Community Living Award Received**

On September 22, 2016, Housing York was invited to attend the Community Living York South Annual General Meeting held at their facilities in Richmond Hill. Housing York was honoured to receive a Partnership Award which was presented by one of the tenants living at the Richmond Hill Hub receiving support from Community Living.

Community Living's mission is to empower people with an intellectual disability to live, learn, work and participate in their community in support of their vision of a society where everybody belongs. The association supports 300 people in the Richmond Hill area including nine tenants who live at Mackenzie Green and the Richmond Hill Hub. Four of these tenants, reside at the Richmond Hill Hub, have complex medical needs and are receiving support collaboratively through March of Dimes Canada, Central Community Care Access Centre, the Central Local Health Integration Network and Housing York.

Housing York is proud to partner with organizations doing this important work in our communities. Community Living clients are able to live with dignity and independence at

Mackenzie Green and the Richmond Hill Hub and have become important members of the Housing York community and valued neighbours to our residents.

## Site Activities

### **Richmond Hill Hub**

The residential units at the Richmond Hill Hub are now fully occupied and the remaining 2,250 square feet of commercial space, located on Yonge Street, is in the process of being leased.

CrueTV was the successful applicant to occupy the Social Enterprise Space. They deliver innovative hands-on-training and create networking opportunities to careers in the digital sector for youth and young adults facing barriers to employment. The organization provides access to cutting edge technology and delivers affordable digital production services to businesses as part of its sustainable programming. CrueTV bridges the digital divide by providing employers with qualified and competent apprentices/placements. Their range of services benefits youth and young adults on their journey to economic prosperity by equipping them with skills needed now and in the future.

Renovations to the space will commence shortly and Housing York will ensure these renovations cause minimal disruption to the residents. CrueTV will be operating out of the space in early 2017. The rent from this space will contribute an additional \$45,000 in revenue to the Richmond Hill Hub.

### **Energy Upgrade**

In partnership with the Housing Services Corporation, Housing York is continuing with its Energy Conservation Program. The next community champions that have been selected to work together to reduce energy consumption at their buildings will be 55-57 Orchard Heights in Aurora and 84 Oxford in East Gwillimbury. Before and after data will be tracked and shared with tenant, on a quarterly basis, posting real-time energy report cards in their respective buildings. Seeing the energy savings will continue to keep tenants motivated throughout the process to be more energy conscious. Energy incentive prizes were given out to those tenants who participated and attended the kick-off meeting.

### **Emergency Preparedness and Fire Safety**

Housing York takes tenant safety very seriously. Over the past month, they have put together packages which include an Emergency Preparedness Guide and Fire Safety Procedures applicable to individual dwellings. The packages were dropped off during annual unit inspection visits. Housing York has seen an increase in weather related events over the past few years and continues to work with tenants on raising awareness

and providing simple tools to better prepare for events such as power outages and loss of services.

## **Capital Updates**

Several capital projects are underway. Elevator replacements at 474 Fairy Lake Gardens in Newmarket and 75 Dunlop in Richmond Hill are scheduled to commence November 14, 2016 with an estimated completion of December 13, 2016. Both replacements will be handled by the same contractor and the work will be properly staged so that it will be completed on time.

## **Kitchen Replacements - Rose Town, Springbrook Gardens and Mulock Village**

Housing York is completing the final phases of kitchen replacements at Rose Town and Springbrook Gardens in Richmond Hill and Mulock Village in Newmarket. The mock-ups have been completed at these three locations and approved by Housing York staff. The construction period to complete the 190 new kitchens has commenced and work is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2017.

## Tenant Engagement

### **Tenant Internet Access**

In May 2014, Regional Council endorsed York Region's Broadband Strategy which promotes community wireless internet availability across the Region. In support of this strategy, earlier this year Housing York piloted wireless internet access in the common rooms of three sites: Blue Willow and Mapleglen in Vaughan; and Mackenzie Green in Richmond Hill.

Given the success of the pilot, Housing York has expanded the benefits of wireless internet communication accessibility to all Housing York tenants in the common rooms of an additional 23 Housing York properties in all nine local municipalities. Over the next several months, computers will be installed at these locations and training programs will be explored specifically focused on assisting senior tenants to become more computer literate.

The overall goal is to:

- Improve communication between tenants and Housing York staff as identified in the 2016 Housing York annual survey. Tenants have confirmed that email communication is the preferred choice over telephone for those that have access to email
- Engage computer literate senior tenants as community champions to train and support other seniors through the computer learning process to build stronger and more connected communities

- Assist those who do not speak or write in English to communicate in their home language through online translation services
- Make community and business services such as online banking, Regional programs and support services convenient and accessible
- Give residents with limited mobility more independence
- Allow families living apart to connect
- Engage communities by providing access to social platforms, recreational and entertainment resources

### Celebrating New Affordable Housing

Friday October 14, 2016, marked the official opening of Belinda's Place in Newmarket and the Richmond Hill Hub. Representatives from the federal and provincial government were on hand, along with municipal officials, to celebrate the opening. Belinda's Place and the Richmond Hill Hub will provide affordable housing to individuals and families living in York Region. The event was well received by all including the Salvation Army and 360 Kids, the operators of these two new facilities.

As well, the event officially celebrated the opening of six new housing projects in the Region. Housing York owns and operates three of the properties acknowledged: the Richmond Hill Hub, Lakeside Residences (Georgina) and Kingsview Court (King).

### Financial Update

Welcome Michelle Willson, Chief Financial Officer

On October 17, 2016, Housing York welcomed Michelle Willson as their new Chief Financial Officer. Michelle has been an Economist and a Senior Policy Advisor at the provincial and federal levels of government. For the past 12 years she has worked in the university sector at the University of Ontario Institute Technology and more recently at Trent University as the Associate Vice President of Finance. Michelle will lead Housing York to develop a number of initiatives including a Reserve Fund and Long Term Fiscal Strategy.

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Rick Farrell  
General Manager

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