



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: June 9, 2016  
RE: **Housing Operations – Monthly Activity Update**

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This Housing Operations update provides highlights of progress against the 2016 Business Plan and a summary of key events and tenant engagement activities that have taken place over the past month as well as a financial status update.

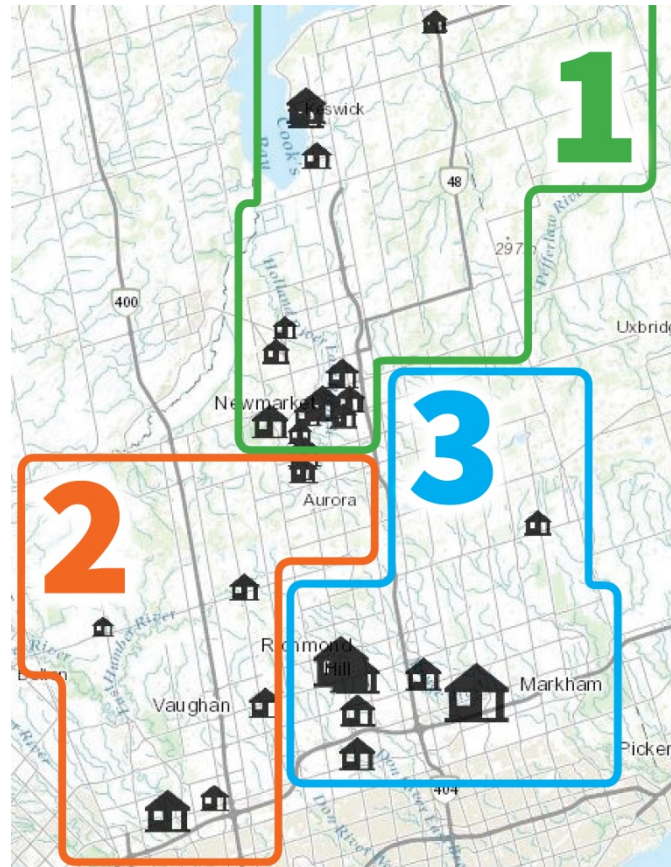
### **2016 BUSINESS PLAN**

#### **Develop Capacity for Growth:**

Housing York's 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan identifies the need to ensure that the organizational structure and resources are able to support and manage portfolio growth and the increasing complexity of its business, both in terms of more technically sophisticated buildings and a tenant population with more complex needs and service expectations.

After a review of its operational processes, Housing Operations is now proceeding with changes to its current staffing and service delivery model. Currently Superintendents are assigned one or two building while Maintenance Technicians and Tenant Service Coordinators are assigned a limited number of properties. Going forward they will be formed into multi-disciplinary teams and assigned a group of buildings in one of three geographical zones. One Superintendent in each zone will work an evening shift/weekend shift. Tenant Service Coordinators will have regular site visit days. An Operations Support team will be created to: develop increased opportunities for tenants to influence policy and strategic decisions; develop and implement a performance management framework ensuring consistent policies and procedures; and provide environmental scanning to aid in strategic thinking going forward.

## New Zones



Benefits of this change include:

- Greater staff presence on site with an integrated team approach which will enhance communication and interaction for tenants and allow for identification of issues enabling earlier intervention, when required
- Expanded hours of site service as a result of evening/weekend Superintendent
- Reduced need for tenants to travel to one of Housing York's offices as Tenant Services Coordinators will have regularly scheduled site days
- Low level support/social inclusion issues addressed in timely way with regular site visits by Tenant Service Coordinators
- Improved productivity and efficiency as staff resources can be fully utilized and directed to priorities of a whole zone resulting in reduced unit turnaround time and reduction in the need to engage external contractors

- Improved handoffs between functions within a workflow with improved communication between front line team members – i.e. unit turnovers, work orders, etc. as a result of a team approach to accountability
- Increased flexibility to adjust the use of staff resource for major events/activities
- Enhanced ability to respond to emergency situations as more superintendents will have detailed knowledge of every building and its tenants within a zone rather than only one or two buildings
- Improved capacity to develop and monitor performance indicators and to undertake environmental scanning that informs strategic thinking with the addition of the Operations Team
- A more skilled and resilient workforce that will promote staff growth and development

All staff were consulted on the model in April and have since been actively engaged in one of four sounding board groups where they have been discussing implementation details and processes such as workflow, scheduling, integration of the Tenant Services Coordinator role at site level, and physical changes necessary for successful implementation. Staff have all been very engaged in the process and their feedback has been very useful in determining the framework for delivery.

Implementation is set for July 4, 2016. Tenant communications are now being developed. Check-in meetings will be scheduled with the various teams monthly for the first three to six months of implementation to review what is working well and identify areas for improvement.

### **Annual Tenant Survey:**

*“How Do We Measure Up”* surveys have been mailed to all tenants. Housing York received 1,053 responses to the tenant satisfaction survey and an overall response rate of 45%. Over three quarters of the respondents were 65 or older and almost half immigrated to Canada from another country.

Below is a quick snapshot of the survey results.

Criteria	Positive rating	Areas for Improvement
<b>Apartment or Townhome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% would describe their apartment or townhome as a good place to live and feel safe in their home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nearly 15% of respondents ranked appliances as poor</li> <li>Recurring comments about home improvements include flooring, paint, stoves, accessibility, windows and doors, air conditioning, building cleanliness</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance and Repair Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>91% find it is easy or very easy to request a repair and are treated with courtesy when repair work is being done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21% of survey respondents said “no” or “sometimes” when asked if we respond to their repair requests in a timely manner</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89% agree that administrative matters like rent payments and annual paperwork are handled smoothly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38% said “sometimes” or “no” when asked if staff are easy to reach</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% find notices, letters and forms clear and easy to complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments include more tenant meetings, translation and accessibility, requests for staff to return calls promptly</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>84.5% are satisfied or very satisfied with opportunities for involvement in their Housing York community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>72% are not aware of the Housing York Tenant Reference Group</li> <li>Comments include requests for day trips, bus service, exercise classes, game nights, programs for children and youth</li> </ul>

Staff are now preparing action plans to address those areas that have been identified for improvements.

### **Raising Cultural Awareness:**

The “Creating Communities” campaign continues to gain momentum. Launched at Christmas this initiative invites Housing York tenants to submit their photos of cultural customs and traditions. They will be used to promote welcoming and inclusive communities.

As part of the campaign tenants will be offered professional photography sessions at Housing York locations over the summer. This is just one of the ways Housing York hopes to get to know its tenants better and introduce them to their neighbours. Newsletter ads and posters are asking tenants to come to the common rooms to share stories or memories about cultural traditions, customs and holidays. They are being encouraged to bring a special keepsake or souvenir, a family heirloom, an older family photo or an interesting story.

Tenants will be recorded in short video clips and will receive a professional photo for participating. Friends and family are also welcome to join in.

### **Opportunities for Young People:**

We have now completed the youth employment campaign and have offered positions to seven high school students living in four of our communities. Students were very pleased to be given an opportunity and are all excited to commence work with us once their school year comes to an end. For many this will be their first employment opportunity and are pleased to be able to give back to other Housing York communities. These students will work closely with our post-secondary school candidates complimenting the overall summer landscape and maintenance program throughout our various locations.

The Richmond Hill Hub is not the only Housing York property that benefits from its partnership with 360° Kids. This organization also runs youth programs at Mulock Village and Brayfield Manor Monday through Friday. Activities include: homework support; animal therapy; wellness activities; cooking lessons; movie nights; fieldtrips; camps; and educational arts and craft sessions. They also assisted with resumes and provided interview tips and role play sessions to the high school students interviewing with Housing York for the summer student positions.

### **SITE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Fairy Lake Gardens and Evergreen Terrace Elevator Modernization – Newmarket & Richmond Hill:**

The elevators at Fairy Lake Gardens and Evergreen Terrace are at a point where they require rehabilitation to continue to ensure reliable service for these four-story buildings. Work is expected to start in August and be complete by October. As these sites have only one elevator, special accommodations will be arranged to assist residents. A survey has already been sent to residents in order to identify what kinds of supports and when would be useful during this period so that we can put together a proactive plan. Rest areas will be set up on each of the stairwell landings and student volunteers will be available to carry items for the residents.

#### **Mapleglen Residences Walkway Upgrade - Vaughan**

City of Vaughan, York Region Transit and Housing York are working together to make upgrades at Mapleglen Residences. A walkway and roadway crossing from Mapleglen Residences to Vaughan City Hall will be installed in June that will provide improved access to Major Mackenzie Drive and City Hall.

### **Kitchen Replacements at Rose Town, Springbrook Gardens and Mulock Village – Newmarket & Richmond Hill:**

The final phase of kitchen replacements at Rose Town, Springbrook Gardens and Mulock Village will be completed this year. Work to replace 190 kitchens is scheduled to commence this summer and will include the replacement of kitchen cabinets and countertops.

### **Springbrook Community Room Renovation:**

Over recent years, Housing York has noticed a decline in the number of tenants using the community room at Springbrook Gardens. Located in the basement of a stand-alone building, that contained the laundry room and Superintendents office, it was hard to access, dark and not very inviting.

In order to address this issue Housing York began an upgrade of the recreation and laundry space. The laundry has been moved and completely updated. The recreation space has been moved from the basement to the ground floor. This provides a more inviting, light-filled space for residents and increases the potential for greater use of the facility by outside support agencies, given the easy access on the ground floor. Next steps will include purchasing new furniture and engaging the tenants in the furniture selection process. The community is thrilled with the update and can't wait for it to be ready for use.

## **EVENTS**

### **Annual Housing York Community Spring Clean Ups:**

At this time of year Housing York facilitates community clean ups at its townhouse sites. This gives Housing York staff the opportunity to work side by side with tenants and share in the process of creating community pride and spirit, together making their communities even better places to live.

This year the Community Cleanup at Springbrook Gardens and Brayfield Manors were particularly successful. Housing York partnered with the Salvation Army and included re-cycle and e-recycle options. The sites were bustling as tenants donated used electronics, batteries and computers. A Salvation Army truck loaded up trucks with household goods for its thrift stores. Garbage bins were filled with large items and volunteers from the communities assisted by removing scrap metal and unwanted large household electric items.

These options were well received by the Communities. The Salvation Army provided a number of gift certificates for a draw for re-cycling - which have now been distributed to the winning tenants. The community events were followed by a barbeque lunch.

### **Kingview Court:**

Housing York has recently received its second Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Again, through the support of several Township of King representatives, this unit was donated by The Mikey Network Foundation. A training session was held with the tenants at Kingview on May 13, 2016. Training was administered through representatives from the local fire department and York Region's paramedics. It was very well received by all the tenants that participated and they particularly appreciated that the device, when removed from the cabinet, also dials out as a 911 call.

### **Community Health Assessment Program through Emergency Medical Services (EMS):**

This program was launched early in 2015 at four Housing York locations. The initiative was led by McMaster University, CHAP-EMS Research Team. York Region EMS personnel were at the four senior locations selected weekly over several months. The focus was on the prevention of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and falls by providing assessments and health education, linking participants to community resources and reporting results to the family physician. The program within the four locations had a 28% overall participation rate. The next step is for York Region EMS to survey four similar senior Housing York communities (that did not have the program at their building) and compare health data with those sites that did have the service over the past months. This data will be utilized by the CHAP-EMS team for various purposes including looking at the benefits early medical intervention has on reducing 911 calls and also getting tenants the help they need sooner.

## **TENANT ENGAGEMENT**

### **MapleGlen Residences:**

MapleGlen Residences, located at 2185 Major Mackenzie Drive West, recently tripled its tenant gardening area for the upcoming season. It was expanded to allow for a growing number of gardeners to participate in the overall gardening experience. Due to the popularity of this garden initiative, a meeting was held with the enthusiastic gardeners who participated in a discussion on designing the layout of the new garden including assignments of their own growing area. Tenants were pleased with our commitment, supporting the overall investment required to increase the area. This will not only have the benefits of allowing more gardening participants but also allow for more interaction and social inclusion amongst the tenants in the building to come out and enjoy the area and share in a conversation or two. As well, the residents look forward to sharing some of their produce with some of the neighboring residents.

## **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Finance department has launched a project focused on collecting and providing the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association program specialists with utilities consumption

data for 2014 and 2015 in order to determine whether it would be beneficial to join its fixed rate Hydro Program in terms of cost savings and predictability.

### **IT Strategy:**

Since mid-2015, staff have been working on a “technology solutions” roadmap for Housing York. In order to progress that work, a detailed business process review is underway which will set the stage for Housing York operations moving forward. The timing of this work aligns with changes to our operations (e.g. introduction of the new zones) and will include a system upgrade to our existing Yardi software platform. Future initiatives such as more self-serve options for tenants and contractors/vendors and mobile access options for field staff can be realized with the enhanced functionality in Yardi 7S. The detailed process review will provide the details required to ensure the planning effort will result in a comprehensive future state that reduces duplication of efforts, greater access to relevant information, and improved processes, data quality and reliability.

In the next 6 to 18 months, Housing York will focus on the following initiatives:

- Develop a Business Systems Strategy including a resourcing plan
- Complete a detailed process review
- Develop a Solutions Architecture and Roadmap
- Develop a Data Model
- Complete a Request for Proposal for Professional Services
- Implement an upgrade to Yardi

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