

Human Services Planning Board of York Region
Staff Update

HSPB-YR Update	
Agenda Item: Make Rental Happen Collaborative Advocacy Plan and Fair Access Partnership Pilot Program Presentations	
Purpose:	Provide presentations to the Make Rental Happen Collaborative Advocacy Plan target audience and the Fair Access partners.
Outcome:	<p>The ask of local municipalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of the Make Rental Happen Collaborative Advocacy Plan. • Continued support of the Fair Access Partnership Pilot program, building the program into their future planning, and expanding the program. <p>The ask of local school boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness created of the Make Rental Happen Campaign within the schools boards. • Continued support for the Fair Access Partnership Pilot program, building the program into their future planning, and expanding the program. <p>The ask of senior government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the Make Rental Happen dialog with the provincial and federal government.
Recommendations:	1. HSPB-YR receives for information

Progress to Date:

Status
<p>1. What direction was provided by Regional Council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On November 21 2013, regional council approved the following recommendation: <i>“The Regional Clerk circulate the HSPB-YR report to local municipalities seeking endorsement of the Human Services Planning Board of York Region Collaborative Advocacy Plan with an offer to present the Plan to any local municipality should they wish to receive it.”</i> • Following this direction the Board is providing Make Rental Happen presentations to local municipalities upon request as well as to local school boards. During these presentations the Board is also providing an update on the Fair Access Partnership Pilot Program. <p>2. What recent presentations have been given?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Region District School Board and York Region Catholic District School Board received presentations by Adelina Urbanski in March • East Gwillimbury received presentation on April 7 by Regional Councillor Taylor

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal Government Pre-Budget Consultation with MP Lois Brown provided by Regional Councillor John Taylor. As a resource for future consultations a copy of speaking notes is provided in Attachment 1 to this staff update. |
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Next Steps

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up with local municipalities who have not yet received a presentation |
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**York Region, Human Services Planning Board – Make Rental Happen
Federal Government Pre-Budget Consultation
John Taylor, Regional Councillor Town of Newmarket
Co-Chair, Human Services Planning Board
January 14, 2014**

Speaking Notes

Housing is a key driver of the economy.

- A healthy local economy begins with a healthy housing market. A healthy housing market including a full mix and range of housing options and tenure choices is the core of our economic competitiveness, social well-being, and community health.
- More rental housing means:
 - Our businesses and industries will be more competitive, as their ability to attract and retain employees increases when a mix of housing options are available.
 - Newcomers and young professionals attracted to the Region's job opportunities can find housing close to work.
 - More local housing options increases productivity by reducing traffic congestion, decreasing commute times, and increasing labour mobility.
 - Investing in housing increases our GDP and creates jobs. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, each dollar spent on housing equals a \$1.40 increase in GDP and investing \$1 million in housing generates roughly three full time-equivalent jobs, and 10 additional indirect jobs. (FCM)

The Rental Housing Situation in York Region

- The cost of living in York Region is rising and moderate and low income families are having trouble keeping up.
- The average purchase price of a new single family detached home now surpasses \$790,000, which is unattainable for a growing number of moderate income residents
- With home ownership unattainable, the Board has concluded that the Region's significant shortage of rental housing is the single most important issue impacting the ability for moderate income residents to make ends meet.
- As a proportion of total housing stock, York Region has the lowest rental supply in the Greater Toronto Area. Only 11.5% of housing in York Region is rental, compared to a Provincial average of 28.4% and a national average of 30.6%.
- Today nearly no private market rental housing units are being built in York Region.
- Out of the 10,570 housing starts in 2012, only 33 were private market rental housing starts.

What is the ongoing impact of a lack of rental housing options?

- Challenges for businesses – struggle to attract or retain employees who are unable to find affordable local housing options
- Increased traffic congestion – people are forced to travel longer distances from home to work
- Lower quality of life – longer commutes negatively impact our environment and health by increasing emissions, stress, and time away from home
- Seniors and young adults are leaving the region to find housing that meets their needs.

- Heightened demand for social housing units – we have more than 10,000 households on the social housing wait list and demand continues to rise.

Overall Message:

- Creating the conditions to build private market rental housing involves a balance of influencing behavior, beliefs and attitudes, as well as changes to the regulatory frameworks that govern how rental housing is built
- A strong economy needs a healthy housing market with a mix of housing options for everyone.
- Rental Housing Options are needed in the housing system to open up affordable housing options, as renting a home is inherently more affordable than owning a home.
- Private Market Rental Housing options is one solution
- No one organization can effect this change in isolation. Re-engaging the private sector to build rental housing will involve all levels of government re-examining current policies and practices to make adjustments and remove barriers and provide incentives
- The Region is able to lead the conversation, involve local municipalities and propose a framework for change and link policies together.

What has the Region already been doing to encourage new rental housing?

- From 2004 to early 2013, the Region constructed 734 new affordable rental units, with leveraged federal and provincial investments.
- York Region is the first service manager in Ontario to reduce the multi-residential tax rate to match the homeowner's rate
- York Region invested \$3.3 million (up to 2012) to offset development charges for affordable housing under the *Municipal Capital Facilities Bylaw*
- The Affordable Housing Incentive Program dedicates the Region's water and wastewater servicing allocation reserve to multi-unit government funded rentals, benefiting 303 units in 2012

How is the Region demonstrating leadership in taking further action to re-engage the private sector in creating rental housing?

- Regional Council and several areas of the Corporation have come together to advance the need for more rental housing options (Community & Health Services, Long Range Planning, Economic Development)
- The Human Services Planning Board of York Region has created a collaborative advocacy plan entitled *Make Rental Happen – Creating the Conditions to Build Private Market Rental Housing* – intended to engage all levels of government, the building industry, the finance sector and corporate champions in finding solutions:
- Council approved the *Draft 10-Year Housing Plan* for submission to the Province in October 2013. The Draft 10-Year Plan supports the development of new rental housing, including private sector rental units, in the Increase the Rental Housing Supply Goal Area.
- *York Region Official Plan's* encourages construction of new rental units with a full mix and range of unit sizes, including family-sized and smaller units as well as the requirement that 25 per cent of all new housing and 35 per cent of new housing in Regional Centres and key development areas be affordable.
- As part of a pilot project to stimulate private sector investment in rental housing development, Regional Council directed staff to negotiate a development charges deferral agreement with a private developer to build approximately 180 rental housing units on the Davis Drive transit

corridor, which supports the Region's centres and corridor, intensification, and transit supportive city building vision.

- A fast-track (one-stop) rental housing construction application team to assist the private sector in navigating the development application process.

What can the Federal Government do?

- The Federal Government can help the Region create the conditions necessary for the private sector to become reengaged in building rental housing by reviewing policy and programs to stimulate growth in the industry, such as:
 - Provide direct assistance to low and moderate income households in the form of a housing tax credits to renter households.
 - Enhance rent subsidy funding programs in existing social housing and renewing investing in affordable housing agreements with provincial and territorial governments
 - The implementation of *Housing First* requires a supply of housing to be available and the social and mental health supports to promote access to the hard to house
 - Amend federal tax policy to encourage the building and maintenance of rental housing, such as reducing GST payments on the development of rental housing.
 - Create a Rental Development Direct Lending Program to stimulate investment in new market-priced rental units. (FCM)
 - Identify surplus government land in York Region that may be developed as rental housing.
 - Initiate a rental housing protection tax credit system to preserve and stop the erosion of existing rental properties (through demolition or conversion to condominium developments). (FCM)
 - Create an Eco-energy Rental Housing Tax Credit to improve the quality of rental stock, reduce high utility costs for tenants, reduce emissions and environmental impact, and increase resale and future value to landlords. (FCM)