



## Report of the General Manager

### **Proposed Approach for Developing Housing York Inc.'s 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan**

#### **Recommendations**

The Board of Directors receive this report for information.

#### **Summary**

This report outlines the proposed approach for developing the Housing York Inc. (HYI) 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan. The current HYI Plan, [\*Achieving New Heights through Innovation and Sustainability\*](#), concludes in 2020.

The 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan will build on HYI's successes achieved under the current plan, while seeking innovative and ambitious approaches to help address HYI and the Region's housing challenges. The plan will be presented to the HYI Board of Directors for approval in December 2020.

#### **Background**

##### **Housing York Inc. provides affordable housing to over 4,000 residents**

HYI owns and operates 36 housing sites with 2,762 units distributed through all nine local municipalities, and five emergency and transitional housing facilities. HYI manages building operations, ensures properties are well-maintained and financially sustainable, supports successful tenancies and promotes resident engagement with the vision of building communities that everyone would be proud to call home. As the largest of 45 community housing providers in York Region, HYI has an important role in addressing the limited supply of purpose-built rental housing stock, providing residents with high quality, well maintained and affordable community housing units. Housing is a key social determinant of health, and HYI's success is essential to ensuring the health and wellbeing of HYI residents.

##### **The 2017 to 2020 Plan provides strategic direction to support the provision of high-quality housing, as well as ensuring properties and finances are managed efficiently**

The 2017 to 2020 Plan was developed with input from the HYI Board, residents in HYI communities, staff and community partners. The consultation process included three workshops with the HYI Board in 2015 and 2016, focussed discussions with more than 100 residents from 10 HYI communities, and sessions with staff and community organizations providing supports to HYI residents.

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In [November 2016](#), the HYI Board approved the plan, with five strategic directions:

1. Strengthen community health
2. Build long-term financial sustainability
3. Effectively manage assets
4. Provide good governance and strengthen organizational capacity
5. Inform and implement Regional housing initiatives

HYI has achieved success under each of these five strategic directions. Accomplishments in 2019 include:

- Finished construction of Woodbridge Lane, a 162-unit affordable rental housing development in the City of Vaughan
- Developed a portfolio management strategy to support informed decision making regarding the future of buildings within the HYI portfolio
- Led a comprehensive resident survey to understand the needs of HYI residents, satisfaction with their housing communities and services, and opportunities for improvement

The HYI Board will receive a comprehensive report on 2019 achievements as part of the annual report in June 2020.

The 2017 to 2020 Plan also advances key Regional strategies. This includes supporting the 2020 to 2023 Corporate Strategic Plan by delivering and promoting affordable housing in support of the Region's community health, safety and well-being priority. The 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan will continue to align with the Corporate Strategic Plan, as well as other Regional strategies and priorities.

**Developing a new strategic plan for 2021 to 2024 will ensure Housing York Inc. is positioned to respond to increasingly complex challenges over the next four years**

In [October 2019](#), Council approved an updated 10-year housing and homelessness plan, [Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone](#), to respond to Region-wide issues of housing supply, housing stability and sustainability of the housing system. The update was informed by data identifying housing market pressures and consultations with the community. The plan focuses on three goals:

1. Increasing the supply of affordable and rental housing
2. Helping people find and keep housing
3. Strengthening the housing and homelessness system

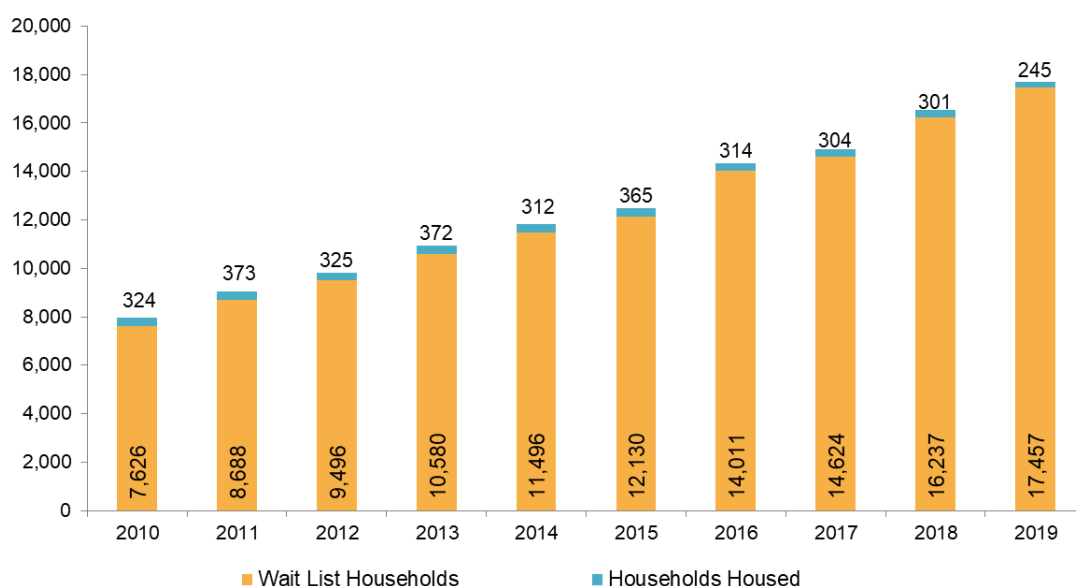
HYI has an important role in achieving the goals of the housing and homelessness plan. In developing the plan, actions from the current HYI plan were embedded and the two plans will continue to be aligned.

As York Region continues to grow, it has become increasingly difficult for many residents to find and keep housing they can afford. Purpose-built rental housing is in particularly short supply.

According to 2016 Census data, York Region had the lowest proportion of rental housing in the Greater Toronto Area. This is compounded by a low vacancy rate of 1.2% in 2019, while the average resale price for all housing types rose above \$940,000.

Affordability challenges in the private housing market place greater pressure on the housing and homelessness system, and demand for subsidized housing continues to grow. Since 2010, York Region's subsidized housing wait list more than doubled in size. By the end of 2019, the wait list had 17,457 households, an increase of 8% from 2018, with another 805 households having applications waiting for assessment. In comparison, 245 households were housed from the wait list across York Region in 2019, down from 301 households housed in 2018. Of those housed in 2019, 125 households were housed within HYI's portfolio. Wait list growth and the number of households housed from 2010 to 2019 are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Subsidized Housing Wait List Growth and Households Housed, 2010 to 2019**



Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, 2020

### **Changes in federal and provincial funding programs require new and strategic approaches to increasing community housing supply**

New direct-funding opportunities under the [National Housing Strategy](#) are available to increase supply from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) through a Co-Investment Fund. The CMHC-Ontario Bilateral Agreement states funding to support regional needs and priorities related to social and affordable housing repair, construction and affordability supports tapers off by 2027-28 in order to prioritize funding for the Canada Housing Benefit, which begins in 2020-21. This means Service Managers may see a reduction in the types of federal/provincial capital programs that have been essential to enable HYI to expand its portfolio since the early 2000s.

Under the [Community Housing Renewal Strategy](#), the province has introduced a simplified regulatory framework for delivering mandated housing programs that should drive administrative efficiencies, and is exploring new opportunities to develop a more streamlined and sustainable housing system.

## Analysis

### **A plan for 2021 to 2024 will continue to promote sustainability of Housing York Inc.'s communities and identify opportunities for growth, other rent models and further energy savings**

The development of the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan will build on accomplishments to date. HYI will continue to offer residents quality homes in inclusive communities and be a leader in affordable housing. The plan provides the opportunity to be innovative in supporting the diverse needs of HYI's existing residents, while addressing the complex challenge of providing additional supply to meet increasing demand. This may include creating new affordable and market rental housing, evaluating existing and new rent models, and exploring further opportunities for energy savings.

The proposed plan includes:

- Ensuring HYI's vision and mission statements continue to support residents' needs and reflect the goals of the Board
- Environmental scan, and analysis of HYI's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to inform development of the plan and promote continued success over the next four years
- Updated strategic priorities and actions to reflect the current housing landscape, opportunities and emerging local needs
- Financial plan to meet the objectives within available funding
- Key performance indicators and associated targets to evaluate progress and outcomes

### **The proposed approach to develop the Housing York Inc. 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan includes four phases**

The proposed approach consists of the following phases:

1. Project Planning (underway)
  - Includes developing a work plan, consultation plan, environmental scan, and analysis of strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats to ensure the plan is informed by the needs of HYI communities
2. Consultation (Winter/Spring 2020)
  - Includes engagements with key stakeholders to inform priorities, actions and performance indicators, including two workshops with the HYI Board as outlined in Table 1
3. Outline Development and Internal Review (Spring/Summer 2020)
  - Includes reviewing consultation results, determining themes and goals that align with budget realities and seeking input on draft goals and actions with the HYI Board

#### 4. Plan Development and Final Approval (Fall 2020)

- Includes developing the plan in accordance with HYI Board direction, presenting the draft plan to the Board for review, discussing in September through a third workshop and seeking final approval of the plan in December 2020

#### **To develop the plan, the Housing York Inc. Board of Directors, key partners and residents will be engaged through a collaborative consultation process**

Collaboration with partners and stakeholders is essential to building a plan that reflects the needs of HYI's communities. The consultation approach for developing the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan will follow a process similar to the successful one employed for the 2017 to 2020 Plan, including engagement of the Board, HYI residents and staff.

The Board of Directors will be engaged through three workshops held throughout 2020 to inform development of the plan. The workshops are planned to directly follow HYI Board meetings. The 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board in late 2020 for final approval. Table 1 outlines details on the proposed workshops and associated timing.

**Table 1**  
**Proposed Workshops with the Housing York Inc. Board of Directors**

Purpose	Proposed Dates
Review HYI's vision and mission and results of environmental scan, and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to inform strategic priorities	March 4, 2020
Identify strategic priorities, actions, key performance indicators, and targets relating to managing and growing assets, and supporting residents and partnerships	May 6, 2020
Review the draft plan and seek feedback on the established strategic priorities, actions, key performance indicators and targets	September 2, 2020

In addition to the Board, HYI residents and staff will be engaged in developing the plan. Actions that support residents' needs will be informed by results of the 2019 HYI resident survey as well as targeted engagements with residents. Internal staff will be engaged to develop the strategic priorities and actions, and explore opportunities to continue building partnerships. The Human Services Planning Board of York Region will be engaged to inform strategic priorities and actions, and to identify opportunities to create new and strengthen existing partnerships with human service agencies to support residents.

#### **Financial Considerations**

The activities of the proposed approach to developing the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan are within the approved budget and include anticipated consulting fees for workshop facilitation. There are no other financial implications to the strategic planning process. Funding for implementing the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan beyond 2022 will be considered through development of the Region's next multi-year budget.

## Local Impact

A new strategic plan for HYI provides an opportunity to identify new and different ways to address demand for housing across all nine local municipalities. A collaborative consultation process with the HYI Board, residents and staff will ensure that the plan reflects resident needs, portfolio growth and energy savings in housing locations across the Region.

## Conclusion

The Region and HYI have been successful in maintaining existing affordable housing in a good state of repair, increasing the supply of community housing and supporting the diverse needs of residents; however, in view of the ratio of unit turnover versus demand trend, more needs to be done. In alignment with the Region's 10-year housing and homelessness plan, the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan for HYI will focus on addressing challenges in the Region's affordable rental supply and seek innovative ways to support residents. Activities outlined in the proposed approach will ensure a plan is developed for 2021 to 2024 to guide HYI to continue building strong, healthy and affordable housing communities throughout York Region.

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For more information on this report, please contact Kathy Milsom, General Manager, Housing York Inc. at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72091. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

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