



Community and Health Services Department  
Housing York Inc.

## MEMORANDUM

To: Directors of Housing York Inc. Board

From: Kathy Milsom, General Manager

Date: December 9, 2021

Re: Update on Regional Housing Activities and Initiatives and Opportunities for Housing York Inc.

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This memorandum responds to a request from the Chair of the Housing York Inc. (HYI) Board of Directors for information on Regional housing related activities and initiatives currently underway and the related roles and opportunities for HYI. While York Region has broad and numerous roles in the housing system and is undertaking many activities in these areas, this memo focuses specifically on those that directly impact HYI's work as a Regionally owned housing provider.

### **As an upper-tier municipality, York Region has multiple roles and responsibilities related to housing**

York Region's roles in the housing system include Regional planning and growth management and as the provincially designated Service Manager responsible for community housing and homelessness services.

The Region is responsible for the growth management and planning policy framework, established through the Regional Official Plan in accordance with provincial direction under the *Planning Act, 1990*, and provided by the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Regional Official Plan directs new planning and development in York Region, establishes affordable housing targets as required by the province, and works with local cities and towns to encourage and promote development of affordable rental and ownership options, including community housing. Regional policies work with municipal land use planning tools and initiatives at the local level.

The Region is also responsible for housing and homelessness system planning in accordance with its housing and homelessness plan as the designated Service Manager under the *Housing*

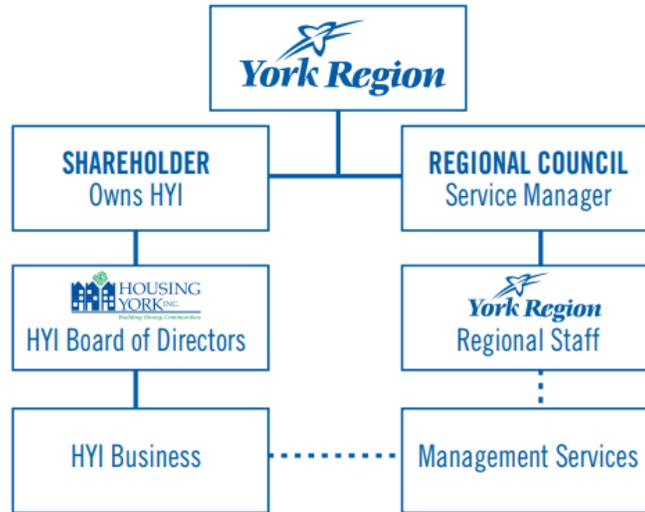
*Services Act, 2011*. In this capacity, Regional responsibilities mandated and regulated by the province include:

- Setting local housing priorities and measures to address housing needs through [Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone](#), the Region's 10-year housing and homelessness plan
- Funding and administration of 43 community housing providers, including HYI, non-profits and cooperatives, representing 6,717 subsidized and market rental homes across all nine local cities and towns
- Administering federal and provincial funding for new community housing supply, capital repairs, and portable rental supports including the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit
- Managing the subsidized housing wait list, which is used by HYI and other community housing providers to fill vacancies in accordance with provincial rules
- Planning, managing, developing, and providing oversight and funding delivery of housing and homelessness services to service providers, including administering emergency housing, homelessness prevention, and housing stability services to help people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness to find and keep housing

### **Housing York Inc. is the Region's housing corporation and is guided by the 2021 to 2024 Housing York Inc. Strategic Plan**

HYI is one of 43 community housing providers in York Region. HYI is incorporated under the *Ontario Business Corporations Act, 1990*, and solely owned by York Region. York Regional Council is the shareholder for HYI, responsible for approving the auditor, appointing the HYI Board of Directors and approving the shareholder direction that sets out the Board's authorities. Regional staff provide management services for strategic planning, financial services and operations as HYI does not have its own employees. The organizational structure is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:  
Organizational Structure of the Region and HYI**



As a leader in York Region’s housing sector, HYI manages and maintains 36 housing properties across the Region. HYI is also the owner of five emergency and transitional housing facilities with specific mandates for youth, women, men and families. While the Region is the lead on emergency and transitional housing, and each site is operated on behalf of the Region by a community partner, HYI works closely with the operator and with Regional staff to ensure buildings remain in a good state of repair to continue supporting the diverse needs of each household.

HYI’s work is guided by [Building Better Together: Housing York Inc.’s 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan](#), which was approved by the Board of Directors in November 2020. The Region’s goals and actions as Service Manager are articulated in the 10-year housing and homelessness plan, and HYI has an important role in helping advance the Region’s housing priorities.

**Housing York Inc. contributes to Regional initiatives across the housing system**

The housing system consists of several segments that serve residents throughout their lives as their needs and circumstances change. This memo focuses on HYI’s roles within these segments, including market housing, community housing, and emergency and transitional housing.

Market housing serves households with a range of incomes; however, many households within this segment may face affordability challenges or housing instability. In the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, York Region has the lowest proportion of rental housing at 14%, and the highest proportion of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs, with 52% of renters facing affordability challenges. The Region has planning and policy roles to help improve housing affordability and support new rental supply. While HYI does not have a direct planning

or policy role within the housing market segment, it contributes to the rental stock in York Region which is in short supply. Approximately 20% of HYI's units are rented at market rates.

Community housing provides subsidized or affordable market rents to households with low and moderate incomes, delivered by non-profit and cooperative housing providers and HYI. As a housing provider, HYI has a critical role within this housing segment by providing safe, affordable housing options to 2,762 households. HYI owns and operates 41% of community housing units in York Region and has committed to doubling the rate of growth to increase much needed community housing supply.

Emergency and transitional housing falls under the responsibility of the Region and is delivered on its behalf by community agencies, providing a safe, temporary place to stay, as well as wraparound supports to secure housing as quickly as possible for people experiencing homelessness. As the owner of five emergency and transitional housing facilities, HYI supports Regional programs by providing operations and maintenance services.

The roles of the Region and HYI within the housing segments are summarized in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
**Roles of the Region and HYI within Housing Segments**

<b>Market Housing</b> Private rental and ownership	 Planning and policy role in accordance with provincial direction
	 Provision of market units within HYI communities
<b>Community Housing</b>	 Service Manager role as mandated and regulated by the province Shareholder, new construction and management services for HYI
	 Community housing provider
<b>Emergency and Transitional Housing</b>	 Service Manager role as mandated and regulated by the province, new construction, and funding/oversight of agency partners
	 Owns and maintains facilities with Regional funding

### **Many Regional activities and initiatives may present opportunities for Housing York Inc. and York Region residents in need**

Across all housing segments, Regional activities and initiatives continue to support new supply and affordability within HYI communities. Examples include:

- Council established a Housing Affordability Task Force to identify solutions to address housing affordability in York Region
- Ongoing development of new community housing buildings that HYI receives upon completion. Most recently completed is Woodbridge Lane in the City of Vaughan, a 162-unit redevelopment for families, individuals and seniors
- Revenues generated through development charges, in part, fund HYI portfolio expansion
- The Regional Rent Assistance Program increases affordability for households with low income in buildings constructed under affordable housing development initiatives, including HYI communities
- In [September 2008](#), Council endorsed the use of Regional reserve of water and wastewater servicing allocation for multi-unit housing owned by non-profits and HYI to ensure availability of servicing allocation for new development projects

New initiatives and activities include developing an updated [Regional Official Plan](#) through the Municipal Comprehensive Review and potential new financial policies to support new supply and/or affordability, such as a [Vacant Homes Tax](#). If implemented, HYI could benefit from a Vacant Homes Tax as revenues generated could help facilitate new supply, depending on Council's direction. Initiatives within the community housing segment will also directly benefit HYI. This includes continued development of community housing and the new [Community Housing Development Master Plan](#), which will support HYI's strategic plan priority of expanding the housing portfolio by exploring new and innovative ways of increasing supply beyond the normal rate of growth.

Within the emergency and transitional housing segment, the Region is leveraging funding under the [Social Services Relief Fund - Phase 2](#) allocation to develop 18 transitional housing units in the Town of East Gwillimbury and eight transitional units in the Town of Georgina. Upon completion, HYI will provide operations and maintenance services at these new buildings.

Details of Regional housing initiatives and HYI's role and potential opportunities are presented in Attachment 1.



Kathy Milsom  
General Manager

Attachment (1)  
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