
From: Switzer, Barbara <Barbara.Switzer@york.ca> **On Behalf Of** Regional Clerk
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2021 9:57 AM
To: Aguila-Wong, Christine <caguila-wong@markham.ca>
Subject: Regional Council Decision - Unionville Seniors Hub and Community Centre

On December 16, 2021 Regional Council made the following decision:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to Clerk of the City of Markham.

The original staff report is attached for your information.

Please contact Karen Antonio-Hadcock, Director, Integrated Business Services Branch, Community and Health Services Department at 1-877-464-9675 ext.72088 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**

The Regional Municipality of York

Regional Council
Community and Health Services
December 16, 2021

Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Unionville Seniors Hub and Community Centre

1. Recommendations

The Regional Clerk circulate this report to Clerk of the City of Markham.

2. Summary

This report provides an update on implementation of a seniors hub and community centre in Unionville Commons, a Housing York Inc. building in the City of Markham.

Key Points:

- Community hubs are innovative and accessible spaces that bring people together to access a range of services, programs and opportunities to promote inclusive, healthy and resilient communities
- The Council approved Seniors Strategy includes direction to design and implement a multi-service centre/hub model
- Redevelopment of a community housing project located on a campus with a long term care home and a seniors life lease residence in the City of Markham provided the opportunity to establish a seniors hub and community centre
- A Request for Proposal will be issued shortly to select a lead agency to operate the integrated seniors hub and community centre
- In partnership with the selected lead agency, construction of the seniors community centre and hub is expected to be completed in 2023
- Regional funding for capital construction costs to outfit the hub and community centre will be supplemented by federal and provincial government funding through Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, Community, Culture and Recreation funding stream
- Operations are intended to be self funding, avoiding the need for Regional tax levy contributions or subsidies from Housing York Inc. while retaining affordable membership fees for the community centre

- The City of Markham has been an important partner, contributing valuable project advisory support and collaborating to ensure alignment with programs and services

3. Background

Council approved York Region Seniors Strategy includes direction to work with local municipalities to design and implement a multi-service centre/hub model(s)

York Region's seniors population is growing faster than any other age group. By 2031, one in five York Region residents will be over age 65, 21.8% of total population, increasing to 25% by 2041. As seniors age they may require access to supports to remain safely in their homes and stay healthier for longer (see [November 2020](#) report, Forecast for Long-Term Care and Seniors' Housing Implications).

Community hubs can provide seniors with localized, easy to access services that support their health and well being. A community hub is a service delivery model that co-locates multiple organizations under one roof to provide residents with enhanced access to resources, services and programs through collaboration and coordinated planning between the co-located services. In addition to improved service accessibility, community hubs are a cost-effective solution because they can reduce administrative and program duplication and create opportunities for community agencies to offer local and affordable services.

In 2016, Council approved the [York Region Seniors Strategy](#). One of the actions in the strategy is to “work with local municipalities, community agencies, private sector and Central Local Health Integration Network to design and implement a multi-service centre / hub model(s) that will co-locate services to respond to the needs of seniors.” This direction supports age-friendly, complete communities and was reaffirmed in York Region's 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan. Key Activity 3.5 is to “work with local municipalities, community agencies, private sector and Province of Ontario's health agencies to design and implement a multi-service centre / hub model(s) that will co-locate services to respond to the needs of seniors.”

[April 2018](#), York Region Seniors Strategy Update report identified that planning is underway with Regional and City of Markham staff to support the development of the Unionville Seniors Hub that will provide better integrated and coordinated services for seniors to help them age in place for longer.

The new seniors hub and community centre will be located on ground floor of new affordable rental building for seniors, Unionville Commons, in the City of Markham

York Region is working with Unionville Home Society and Minto Communities to redevelop Unionville Home Society campus to include a 265-unit affordable rental building for seniors, [Unionville Commons](#), to be owned and operated by Housing York Inc. The campus is located at 4310 Highway 7 East, City of Markham and includes a long term care home, life lease apartments and community centre for seniors. Existing community housing on the site will be redeveloped by the landowner, Minto, and the residents will be given right of first refusal to

move into Unionville Commons. Construction began in 2019 with substantial completion anticipated Q2 2023. Residents are expected to move in towards the end of 2022 and into 2023.

The redevelopment agreement with Unionville Homes Society and Minto requires the existing community centre on the campus to be vacated in late 2022 to permit redevelopment on that portion of the campus. As part of the agreement, York Region is to build a new community centre, and this provided the opportunity to establish a hub, achieving actions set out in York Region's Seniors Strategy and the 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan. Integrating the hub and community centre supports provision of a robust range of programs and services which enables York Region to maximize use of the space to support community needs and may be more appealing to organizations looking to locate in the hub.

Unionville Commons has approximately 11,000 square feet of accessible, multipurpose, and recreational space for the seniors hub and community centre on the ground floor. Planned exterior seniors hub and community centre spaces include a patio, garden and event lawn (Attachment 1). Design and construction of the seniors hub and community centre is anticipated to begin in Q2 2022, with operations commencing Q1 2024.

The site is serviced by York Region Transit (YRT) route 552, Markham Local and Mobility On-Request Paratransit services, with a designated YRT stop planned near Unionville Commons main entrance. In addition, the site can be accessed by YRT services on Highway 7, including bus rapid transit, and conventional transit Monday through Sunday and holidays. The Seniors hub and community centre will be accessible by car from driveway entrance on Highway 7. Visitors will have shared drop-off and pick-up by main entrance, which is barrier-free, as well as access to short term surface and underground parking spaces. The building supports active transportation with outdoor bicycle storage spaces for visitors. The site is walkable and includes pedestrian pathways that link to the broader community.

The seniors hub and community centre will serve the broader Markham community

The City of Markham is currently home to highest share of seniors population in York Region. Of all seniors in York Region, 31% live in City of Markham. Between 2021 and 2051, number of seniors living in City of Markham is forecasted to grow by 113%.

The seniors hub and community centre will extend beyond serving the residents of Unionville Commons and the campus to also support surrounding communities in the City of Markham to access seniors-focused services, programs and amenities. To support this broader function, there has been extensive engagement to identify programs and services that are needed and could be offered through the Unionville Seniors Hub project.

[September 2019](#) report on 2018 Long-Term Care and Seniors Services Annual Performance Update noted a needs assessment to identify potential programs and services at seniors hub and community centre generated more than 450 responses from residents and partners. Stakeholders were engaged in the needs assessment through online and print surveys, a comment card campaign, focus groups, partner panels, and pop-up consultation sessions at local community centres.

Needs identified included:

- supports geared towards seniors' health including primary care physicians, dentists, podiatrists, and other personal services
- recreation and personal support programs
- newcomer and intergenerational services
- multilanguage programming
- transportation supports

Additional stakeholder engagement will be completed in early 2022 to update the needs assessment.

4. Analysis

The program, governance and financial model for the seniors hub and community centre was determined through community engagement and best practice research

Staff conducted research, including visits to numerous existing hubs, to better understand effective approaches to community hub governance, financing and programming. Attachment 2 provides a summary of research findings.

Through this process, outcome goals were identified for the seniors community centre and hub at Unionville Commons:

1. Governance – continued role for community input into operations through an advisory table; regional oversight; need for experienced leadership
2. Financial – revenue neutral operations for York Region and Housing York Inc.
3. Programming – best organizations for the job; holistic service models; affordability of programming

Lead agency governance model will be used to operate integrated seniors hub and community centre

Governance in this context refers to who makes operational and service delivery decisions including selecting which programs and services are offered out of the hub and community centre and overseeing staffing.

A governance model with York Region as lead operator of seniors hub and community centre was considered. York Region does not currently operate a community centre and does not have that experience. Community and Health Services does have experience with contracting with other organizations to provide services in Housing York Inc. buildings such

as the Richmond Hill Hub in the City of Richmond Hill, where youth emergency and transitional housing supports are provided, or as a service provider at The Link community hub in the Town of Georgina. Although directly operating the hub and community centre would provide York Region with greater control of operations, it would be a new line of business, could be costly, and would be more administratively burdensome than municipal and community-based hubs visited and researched.

Based on research, the lead agency model was selected as the best approach to delivering on all three outcome goals.

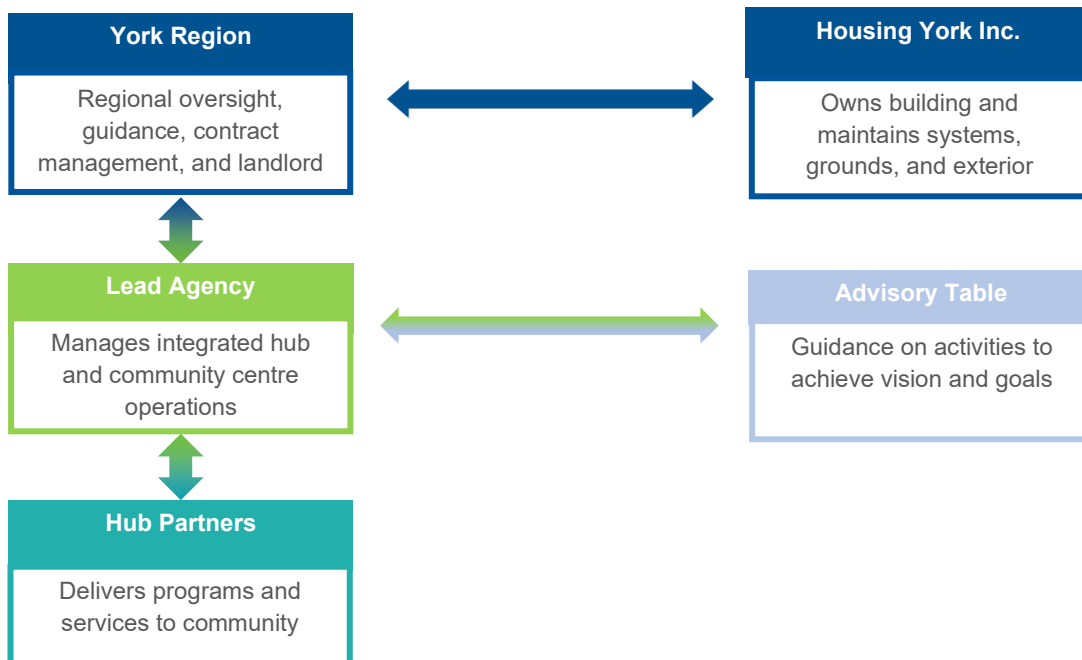
In a lead agency model, one external organization is responsible for service delivery decisions including selecting which programs and services are offered out of the hub and community centre and overseeing staff. A lead agency model balances level of Regional oversight with the necessary agility and client-centered approach to provide services that respond to the needs of residents.

The lead agency approach permits York Region to access the expertise and experience of the lead agency in operating a hub and/or community centre. The organization would be able to leverage its established relationships in the community that provide services aligned with the purpose of the hub, which may extend beyond those available to York Region.

In the lead agency model for the Unionville Commons community centre and seniors hub (Figure 1), York Region will contract with a lead agency up to five years, and provide oversight to operations similar to York Region's current practices in contracting with organizations to operate emergency housing and projects funded through the Community Investment Fund.

Eligible applicants include non-profit agencies, private companies, institutions, and partnerships.

Figure 1
Lead Agency Model



York Region approached City of Markham staff in 2019 to explore project collaboration opportunities. City of Markham declined opportunity to serve as lead agency and expressed interest in collaborating on and supporting space design, business planning, establishing an Older Adult Club, procurement processes, and participating in advisory table.

Seniors hub and community centre to be self-sustaining while affordable and accessible to all residents

The seniors hub and community centre space provided in the Housing York Inc. building and associated systems, exterior and grounds, will be leased to York Region on a cost recovery basis. York Region will make the space available to the lead agency, with the lead agency required to cover the lease costs. The lead agency will be also be responsible for maintenance of leasehold improvements, janitorial services and separately metered utilities.

Operating costs will be the responsibility of the lead agency. To cover its operating expenses, including lease costs, and to support delivery of a range of services, the lead agency will be permitted to sublease space to partner agencies and implement other revenue generating activities. The cost recovery rent and analysis of business cases suggest this would be financially feasible for the lead agency, though there are risks. York Region will work with the lead agency to ensure community centre fees remain affordable and all residents have access to the space.

Construction to fit out the community centre and hub will be completed by York Region, in collaboration with the lead agency. Construction will include designing and building accessible, multipurpose community spaces that support age-friendly service navigation and is responsive to stakeholder feedback.

Details on capital and operating costs are provided in the financial section of this report.

Hub and community centre programming to be guided by advisory table

To ensure lead agency is achieving vision and goals established by York Region, its decisions will be guided by York Region staff along with an advisory table comprised of community members and key partners. The advisory table will be established after the lead agency is selected.

Staff expect services provided will be consistent with the needs assessment and accessible to residents.

York Region will be seeking lead agency through a competitive procurement process

An open, fair, equitable and competitive procurement process will be used to secure lead agency with a Request for Proposals released to market in early 2022. A competitive procurement process will give York Region the opportunity to consider proposals on how the proponent would operationalize York Region's innovative vision of an integrated seniors hub and community centre that meets unique needs of local seniors, including financial viability. All types of organizations, including for-profit, registered charity or not-for-profit will be invited to submit a proposal to serve as lead agency.

The initial contract would be for a period of up to five years. At the end of this period, the contract may be renewed for another five years or cancelled. This will allow time to determine if the lead agency model is working or if another model needs to be considered.

A competitive lead agency selection process is consistent with the procurement process used to select other organizations operating in Housing York Inc. buildings, such as those delivering York Region's Homelessness Prevention Program.

5. Financial

The Federal and Provincial governments will fund 73% of capital costs to fit up the community centre and hub spaces

In conventional lease arrangements the lessee is responsible for all leasehold improvements. The anticipated capital cost of fitting out the seniors hub and community centre is approximately \$2.5 million. As the result of a successful grant application to Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, Community, Culture and Recreation funding stream, from 2022 to 2024, the Federal government will provide up to \$1,000,744 (40% contribution) and the Provincial government will provide up to \$833,870 (33.33% contribution) towards eligible capital costs. A cost share is required. York Region will contribute approximately \$667,246 (26.67% contribution). York Region's capital contribution supports financial viability of seniors hub and community centre and delivery of York Region's objectives. \$2.5 million for leasehold improvements is included in the 2022 Capital Plan.

York Region does not plan to provide funding for seniors hub and community centre operations

The Lead agency will pay lease costs on a cost recovery basis. These lease costs will cover the proportionate share of Housing York Inc.'s municipal property taxes, building insurance, direct labour costs, capital replacement reserve contribution for major building components and replacement of elements provided as part of interior constructions, utilities in common areas, elevator maintenance and inspections, exterior grounds maintenance, and more. The lead agency must be able to financially sustain program management, service delivery and reporting requirements to ensure no negative financial impact for York Region and Housing York Inc.

Similar to other local community hubs, the lead agency will be encouraged to pursue available funding opportunities and generate revenue to ensure operations are self-sustaining. Revenue generation opportunities could include securing tenants to rent space on a permanent basis, charging affordable membership and user fees, room rental fees, applying for Seniors Active Living Centre designation through Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, and grants and donations. The lead agency will also be required to ensure affordability for the community center. However, the lead agency will not be able to regulate the costs charged by partners who sublease space at the hub. The scope of the seniors hub and community services and programs must be appealing to sustain community interest.

York Region staff will continue to manage project and provide oversight, policy, communications, and other business service supports where needed.

6. Local Impact

The City of Markham Older Adult Strategy identifies priorities to best serve its aging population, including committing to building an age-friendly community responsive to older adults. Markham aims to ensure spaces, programs and services are inclusive, flexible and accessible for older adult citizens of all backgrounds and abilities. There is close alignment with York Region's Seniors Strategy, support for age-friendly communities, and seniors hub and community centre project. The seniors hub and community centre will help address needs of Markham's growing seniors population. York Region is grateful to City of Markham for continued collaboration and project advisory support to ensure alignment with programs and services.

7. Conclusion

The seniors hub and community centre aspires to empower seniors, increase connectedness, improve quality of life, and enable seniors to age in place. Public procurement process to select lead agency to operate seniors hub and community centre is expected to conclude in Q2 2022. In 2022 and 2023, York Region will work with lead agency to engage local community members to design and build seniors hub and community centre and plan for program and service delivery. Opening of the seniors hub and community centre

is anticipated Q1 2024. Continued collaboration with the City of Markham is appreciated and key to success for seniors hub and community centre.

For more information on this report, please contact Karen Antonio-Hadcock, Director, Integrated Business Services Branch, Community and Health Services Department at 1-877-464-9675 ext.72088. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Katherine Chislett

Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Approved for Submission:

Bruce Macgregor

Chief Administrative Officer

December 10, 2021
Attachments (2)
eDOCS # 13429641

UNIONVILLE SENIORS HUB AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Location of Seniors Hub and Community Centre on Ground Floor of Seniors Affordable Housing Building in Markham

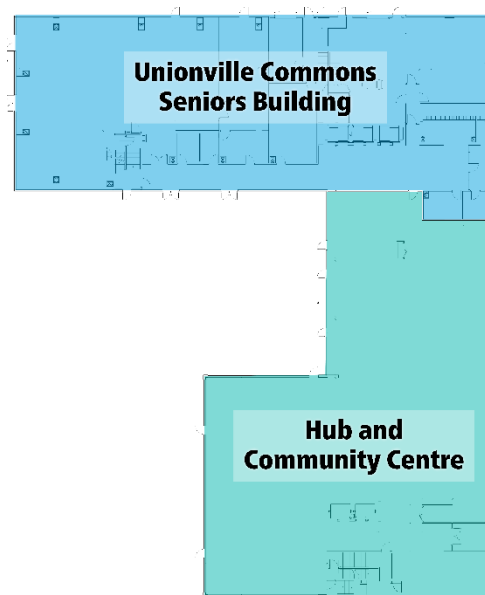
UNIONVILLE COMMONS CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

In 2019, construction began on Unionville Commons, a 265-unit seniors affordable housing building located at 4310 Highway 7 in the City of Markham (Image 1). Unionville Commons includes approximately 11,000 square feet of accessible multipurpose and recreational space on the ground floor for the hub and community centre to provide integrated services and programs for seniors living onsite and the surrounding Markham community. During the design and construction phase of the project in 2022, the division of space between the hub and the community centre will be determined. (Image 2).

Image 1
Rendering of Unionville Commons



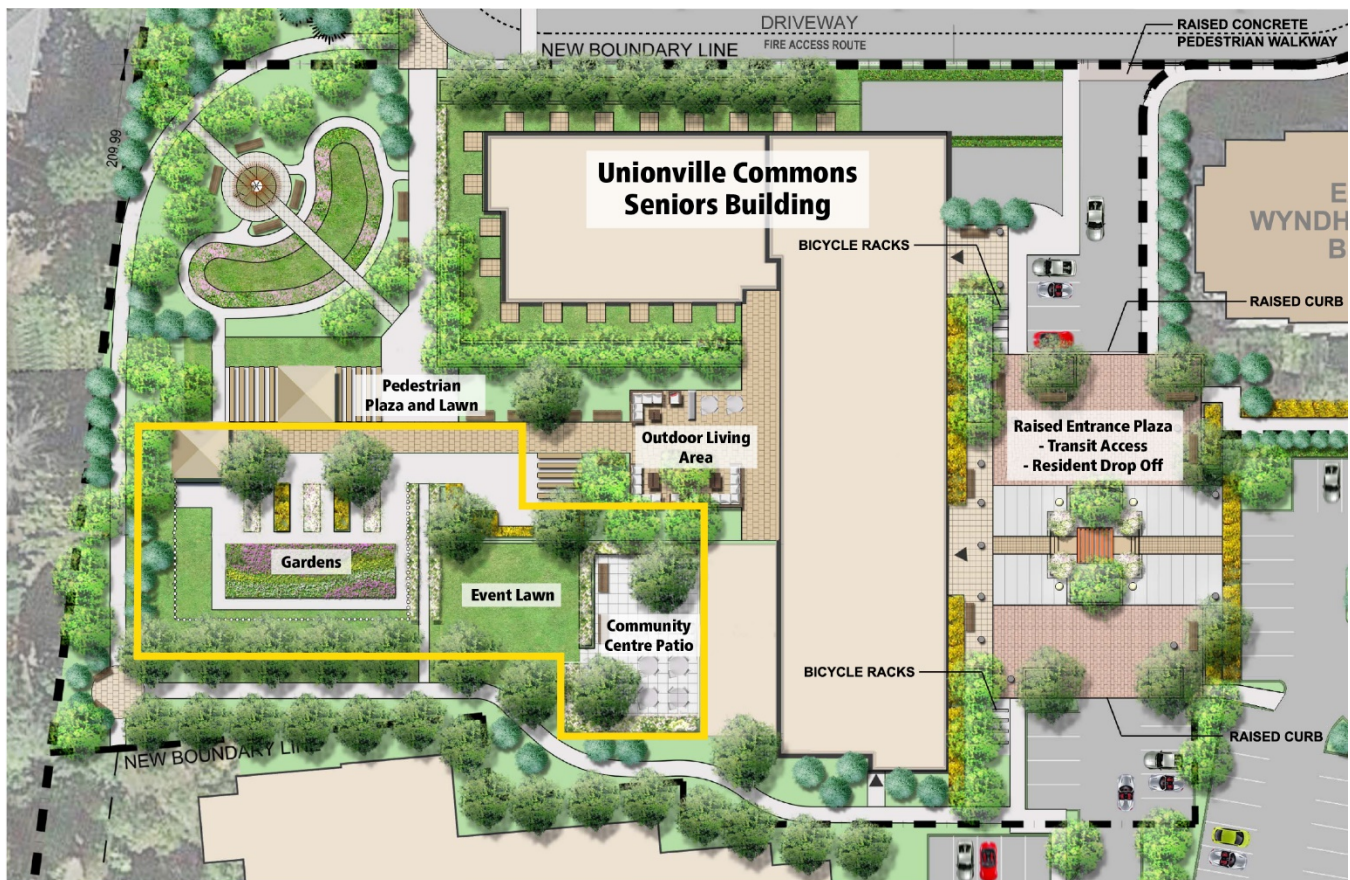
Image 2
Unionville Commons Ground Floor Plan



HUB AND COMMUNITY CENTRE EXTERIOR SPACE

The exterior hub and community centre space is planned to include a patio, vegetable garden and event lawn, highlighted in Image 3. The building is designed to support active transportation and provides outdoor bicycle storage spaces for visitors. The site is walkable and includes pedestrian pathways that link to the broader community.

Image 3
Preliminary Design of Exterior Space



eDOCS# 13485412

Unionville Hub and Community Centre

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY HUB MODELS

Research on Governance, Financial, Program and Service Delivery Models

York Region staff researched and visited numerous existing community hubs to better understand approaches to hub development and governance in 2017 and 2018.

Community hubs take many different forms – from the purpose-built Langs in the City of Cambridge, to The Link operated by the Town of Georgina located in a redeveloped elementary school, to the Scarborough Store Front located in a redeveloped police station in City of Toronto.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY HUBS

There is no one-size-fits all model for community hubs, however, the following characteristics are foundations for success:

- Strong awareness of local community needs through community and stakeholder engagement
- Establishing a vision and purpose for hub to ensure alignment between partners
- Forging strategic partnerships to offer diverse range of programs and services to meet needs of current and future seniors' population
- Approaching facility design with expertise of architects, designers and product representatives experienced with local population
- Ensuring mechanism for evaluation of programs and services to inform service delivery
- Support from all levels of government to operationalize hub vision
- Careful consideration to determine appropriate hub governance model
- Ensuring financial sustainability through use of innovative financing models including social enterprise, public/private partnerships, and grant funding opportunities

GOVERNANCE MODELS

When planning for a community hub, consideration should be given to governance for developing and operating the hub. Governance models formalize processes used to guide and share leadership and decision-making among various partners and stakeholders with clear lines of accountability.

Sample Governance Models

- **Informal Network** – No lead organization; all members participate in decision-making as equal partners; administration shared or managed by designated organization
- **Single Organization/Friendship Centre/Neighbourhood Centre** – Single organization that functions as a community hub; builds partnerships and shares space; may be part of broader network/umbrella association
- **Partnership Models** – Initial partners share the hub development process through steering committee or similar; may secure development funds through individual members; partners may secure separate leases/agreements to secure space in the hub but develop shared governance structure; may transition to lead agency model or incorporated organization
- **Lead Agency** – One agency takes responsibility for hub related funding for shared functions; principal leaseholder or owner of building; hub vision, structure principles developed collaboratively; may transfer some decision-making authority to an inclusive hub governance structure such as an advisory board. This is the model selected for the Seniors Community Center and Hub at Unionville Commons. Lead agency for Seniors Community Centre and Hub at Unionville Commons will be selected through a competitive procurement process. All types of organizations, including for-profit, registered charity or not-for-profit will be invited to submit a proposal to serve as lead agency for Seniors Community Centre and Hub at Unionville Commons
- **Incorporated Organization** – New organization incorporated to govern/manage hub; can be newly incorporated or trustee by hub partner or outside organization

Source: Community Hubs Ontario, Resource Sheet - Governance (2018)

It is critical, regardless of the governance model chosen, for a continued role for community input into hub operations. This can take the form of an advisory committee with resident and partner representation.

FINANCIAL MODELS

Ongoing funding can be a challenge for community hub sustainability. The Province of Ontario, through the Community hubs in Ontario: A strategic framework and action plan, identified several ways to address financial sustainability including:

- Exploring the use of innovative financing models for community hubs, including social enterprise, social finance and public/private partnerships
- Leveraging provincial programs (e.g., ServiceOntario and Employment Ontario) as anchor tenants to support community hub establishment and long-term sustainability
- Investigating municipal financial tools including municipal capital facilities agreements and development charges, to support the creation of new community spaces

Through community hub research, it was identified that municipalities generally have a role in supporting community hub operations ranging from donating vacant space, providing funding for capital improvements and/or providing ongoing operating funding.

PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

Community hub program and service delivery can vary along a continuum, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Program and Service Delivery Model Continuum

Individual	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Integration
Organizations providing services operate independently	Organizations providing services operate independently with cooperation	Organizations providing services operate independently with coordination	Organizations providing services work collaboratively	Organizations work alongside one another to delivery integrated services to ensure client-focused service delivery
Separate funding and minimal communication between organizations	Organizations share information, work together on a case-by-case basis, and endorse each other's programs	Some joint planning occurs between organizations including synchronization of schedules, activities, goals, and events	Shared cultures, visions, values, actions between organizations and a willingness to relinquish some autonomy in interest of collective goals	Shared vision, goals, outcomes, funding and consistent policies and procedures across organizations

This continuum also applies to how community hub space is shared, including offices and reception areas.

LOCAL COMMUNITY HUB EXAMPLES

Staff toured and researched local community hubs to help inform hub development in York Region (summarized in Table 2).

Table 2
Summary of Research on Community Hubs

Hub	Location	Services	Features	Governance
Bathurst-Finch Hub	North York, Toronto	Dental, employment, healthcare, legal, newcomer	Community rooms, kitchen, garden	Lead agency model
Dorset Park Hub	Scarborough, Toronto	Child and family, EarlyON, employment, food bank, mental health, newcomer	Computer lab	Lead agency model
Langs Community Hub	Cambridge, Waterloo	Family, legal, mental health, municipal, newcomer, seniors	Bookable meeting rooms, community kitchen, courtyard, gymnasium, walking track	Lead agency model
Malton Community Hub (in development)	Mississauga, Peel Region	In development	Community kitchen, meeting/event space, music recording room, pop-up stage	Lead agency model
OKN Acton Hub	Acton, Halton	Child, education, municipal, police, youth	Kitchen, multi-purpose rooms	Partnership model
Rexdale Multi-Service Community Hub	Rexdale, Toronto	Employment, family, legal, primary care, newcomer, women	Multi-purpose community spaces	Lead agency model
Richmond Hill Youth Hub (located in Housing York Inc. building)	Richmond Hill, York Region	Youth counselling services, drop-in programming, emergency and transitional housing	Indoor and courtyard recreational spaces	Lead agency model
Scarborough Store Front	Scarborough, Toronto	Education, employment, finance, health, legal, mental health, newcomer, recreation,	Community garden, outdoor sports court	Partnership model

Hub	Location	Services	Features	Governance
		social, women, youth		
The Link	Georgina, York Region	Food bank, health, regional, social, trades training, youth	Community teaching kitchen, event hall	Lead agency model (Town of Georgina)
W&M Edelbrock Centre	Orangeville, Dufferin County	Community, education, employment, mental health	Community garden	Lead agency model (Dufferin County)
Welcome Centre Immigrant Services	7 locations in York Region and Durham Region	Newcomer services including family, health, legal, seniors, women, youth	N/A	Lead agency model
York Region Centre for Community Safety	Markham, York Region	Support for survivors of violence and abuse including family, housing, legal, policy, regional, victim and women	N/A	Partnership model

eDOCS# 13460722