



Affordable and Special Needs Housing Shared and Supportive Housing Policy Review



Draft Affordable and Special Needs Strategy

- April 5, 2011 DSC received a report on Draft Strategy and authorized:
 - Town website posting for public review and comment
 - Technical Resource Group be established to provide input on draft Strategy and participate in the development of an implementation strategy
 - Staff report back to DSC on final recommendations for a Strategy and a plan to implement the actions outlined in the Strategy and incorporate policies for Affordable and Special Needs Housing into the draft Official Plan

Further Examine Shared and Supportive Housing Needs

- SHS Consulting policy framework for Strategy recommended adopting the provincial definition of Special Needs Housing and supported further work examining emergency/transitional and special needs housing gaps
- Staff agree with identifying the definition in the Town's Strategy and the New Official Plan and have retained SHS to complete a further review of Town policies respecting Special Needs Housing, more particularly the need for:
 - *Shared Housing* (ie. student housing, rooming houses, etc.)
 - *Supportive Housing* (ie. group homes, long term care homes, private retirement homes, residential care facilities, etc.)

Review of Rental Conversion and Demolition Policy

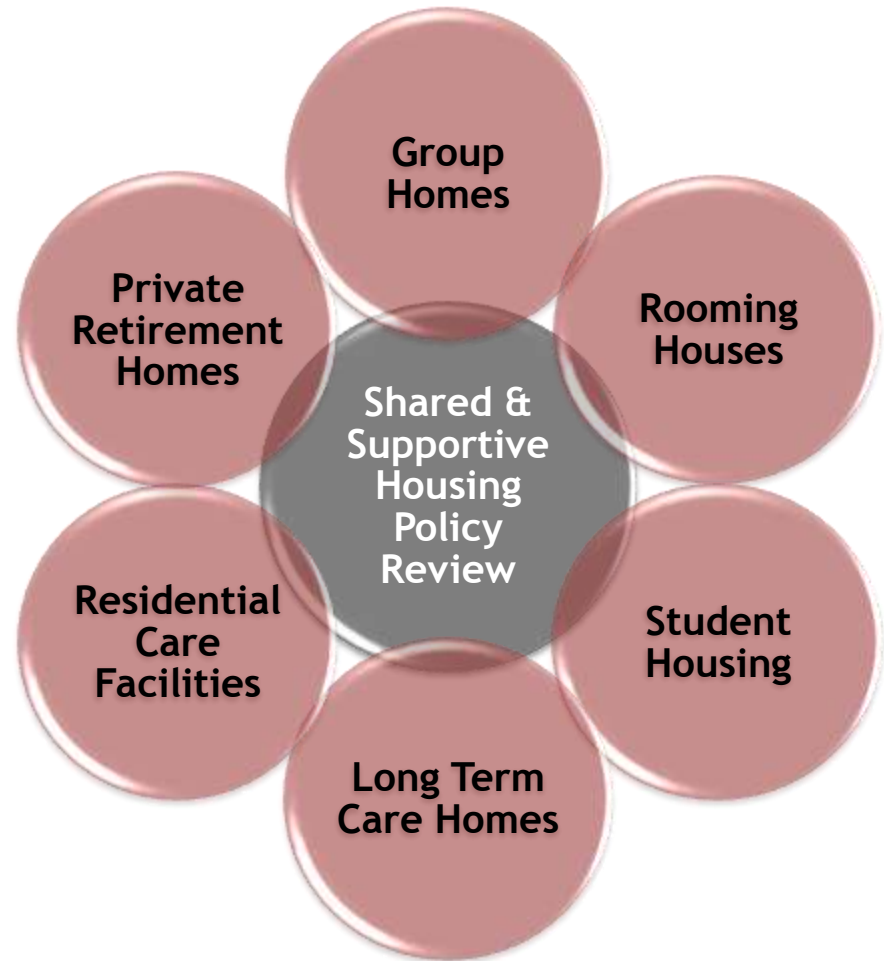
- In addition, a component of SHS research will include a review of policies to govern the conversion or demolition of existing rental units Town-wide, including:
 - an overview of the rationale and policy context for the protection of rental housing
 - a review of conversion and demolition policies of selected municipalities and Regions across the GTA
 - an evaluation of the relevance of each policy to the Town in order to develop a unique set of policy options for Markham
- SHS will report back on research findings in the Fall of 2011

Purpose of Today's Presentation

- To present an overview of the purpose and approach to completing the Town's Shared and Supportive Housing Policy Review
- To present initial findings and discuss preliminary policy directions for Shared and Supportive Housing

Purpose of the Study

- The overall goal of the Study is to identify new Official Plan policies for Shared and Supportive Housing including six key housing forms.
- In addition, review and report back separately on policies re:demolition and conversion of rental housing



Context for the Study

**Markham Affordable & Special Needs
Housing Strategy**

**Identified
Need for
Special
Needs
Housing**



**Recommendations
Related to Special
Needs Housing**



**Shared &
Supportive
Housing
Policy Review**



**New
Markham
Official
Plan**

Context: Overview of Need

Markham's population is aging

- The population aged 55 years and older is expected to increase by 48.1% by 2031

Growing waiting list of housing for persons with disabilities

- There is a lack of special needs housing with some agencies reporting wait times from 7 to 10 years

Growing number of post secondary students

- As of April 2011, Seneca has 1,700 full-time students in Markham

More affordable housing options are needed

- As of December 2010, there were 5,083 applicants on the social housing wait list for Markham

Context: Overview of Need

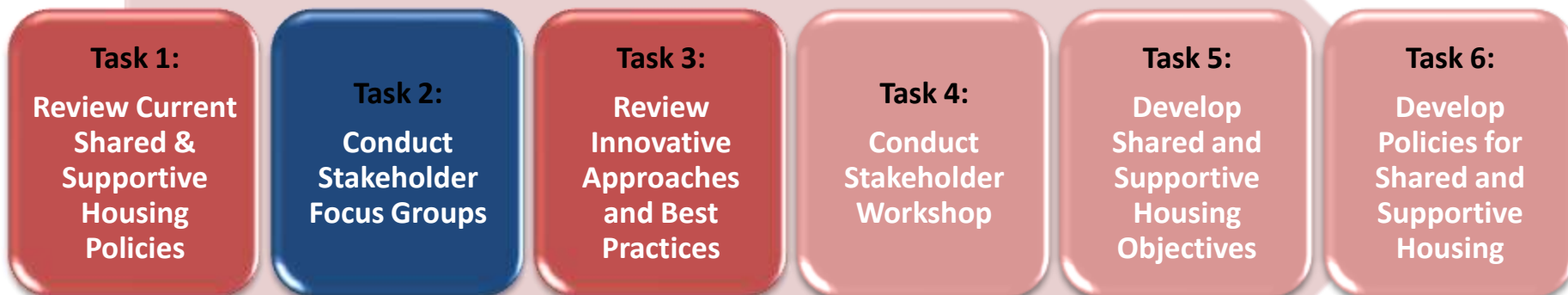
Policy Framework for Housing Strategy included 12 recommended actions that address the provision of special needs housing under the following categories:

- Policy Development
- Financial Incentives
- Develop Partnerships
- Education Campaign



Approach to the Study

We are here



Key study topics:

- Shared & supportive needs housing
- Rental & conversion policies

Focus groups

- with a total of 29 participants including:
- Town staff
 - Central CCAC
 - York Region
 - Community agencies

What is Special Needs Housing?

- **Provincial Definition:**
 - Housing that is used by people who have specific needs beyond economic needs including, but not limited to, needs such as mobility requirements or support services needed for daily living
 - includes both transitional and permanent housing
- **More common reference:**
 - Shared Housing: Rooming Houses, Student Housing
 - Supportive Housing: Group Homes, Long-Term Care Homes, Private Retirement Homes, Residential Care Facilities

Current Town Policy (Markham Official Plan)

- An appropriate proportion of the housing should include units designed to meet the requirements of groups with special needs
- In developed areas, where residential intensification is proposed, the Town will encourage the incorporation of a range of housing types and units designed to meet the requirements of groups with special needs
- The Town will work with partners to facilitate the development of housing for groups with special needs

Current Town Policy (Markham Official Plan)

- Support local initiatives to provide housing options for those with special needs including
 - Encouraging non-profit and co-operative housing developments to provide a minimum of 5% of their units for those with special needs
 - Encouraging developments designed to provide a wide variety of housing options for seniors including “aging in place”
- Increased Height and Density (Bonus) Provisions (as amended and adopted by Council on September 2010)

Current Regional Policy (York Region Official Plan)

- To encourage that special needs housing and emergency, affordable, and seniors' housing be located in proximity to rapid transit and other human services
- To encourage local municipalities to adopt policies for an equitable distribution of social housing types, including:
 - special needs housing



What is a Rooming House?

- Rooming houses and single room occupancy units are a form of shared affordable housing that are important for very low income single people.
- Most rooming houses provide shelter at monthly rents of lower than market rates.
- Some provide meals, housekeeping and other services in addition to the inexpensive accommodation.

Current Town Policy: Rooming Houses

- Rooming houses are permitted within the Town's Official Plan where lands have been designated Urban Residential (subject to various zoning by-laws) and on condition that identified criteria can be met.
- This form of housing is not permitted if there is a bathroom and a kitchen for the exclusive use of an individual occupant
- There is currently no licensing procedure in place (as required in the Official Plan).

What is Student Housing?

- Student housing is accommodation marketed to students attending post secondary education.
- Town of Markham's current Official Plan and Zoning By-law do not have specific policies that address student housing within the Town.



What is a Group Home?

- A group home is a dwelling unit for three to ten persons who require a group living arrangement with supervision due to their emotional, mental, social or physical condition
- A group home is licensed or approved under Provincial Statute



Current Town Policy: Group Homes

- Group homes or other similar residential facilities are permitted by the Official Plan where they are in keeping with the general character and appearance of surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the Town's zoning by-laws do not prohibit group homes.
- Group home policies and regulations adopted by Markham in 1991 were not approved by the Province, and were subsequently repealed.

Current Town Policy: Group Homes

- Zoning staff consider inquiries on a case by case basis in accordance with a set of criteria developed by Legal
- The criteria for zoning inquiries determines whether the Group Home complies generally with the requirements of applicable zoning by-law and whether the Group Home can be characterized or operated as a permitted use
- Zoning may in certain instances seek clarification with Legal Department in determining whether a specific proposal conforms with the Town's zoning by-law

What are Long Term Care Homes?

- Long term care homes are for people who require the availability of 24-hour nursing care and supervision within a secure setting.
- In general, they offer higher levels of personal care and support than those typically offered by either private retirement homes or residential care facilities.

Current Town Policy: Long Term Care Homes

- Long term care facilities are zoned institutional and are permitted within various areas of the Town of Markham.
- Institutional is defined as lands which are predominantly used for community, educational, health care, governmental, or religious purposes.

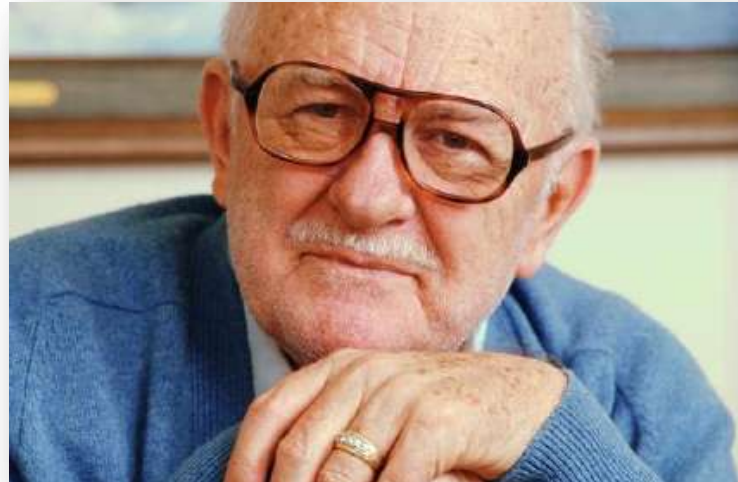


What are Private Retirement Homes?

- The Markham Zoning By-law defines ***retirement homes*** as premises that provide accommodation primarily to retired persons or couples where each private bedroom or living unit has a separate private bathroom and separate entrance from a common hall but where common facilities for the preparation and consumption of food are provided, and where common lounges, recreation rooms and medical care facilities may also be provided.

Current Town Policy: Private Retirement Homes

- Private retirement residences are generally permitted within the Town's Official Plan either under 'urban residential' or 'institutional' categories.
 - If there are supports provided on-site, such as personal care, the housing would fall under 'institutional' zoning.



What are Residential Care Facilities?

- Residential Care Facilities are facilities with four or more beds that are funded, licensed or approved by provincial or territorial departments of health and/or social services.
- Services in these facilities include assistance such as counselling, custodial, supervisory, personal, basic and/or full nursing care to at least one resident.
 - Two types of such housing include Homes for Special Care and Domiciliary Hostels.

Current Town Policy – Residential Care Facilities

- There are no specific policies or zoning regulations related to Homes for Special Care or Domiciliary Hostels.
- In general, this form of housing would be permitted in areas designated and zoned ‘institutional’



Innovative Approaches

- Pocket Housing, Winnipeg, Manitoba

- Two-storey buildings inserted into older neighbourhoods, into infill lots.
- Each building has eight self-contained suites with a separate entrance, private washroom and kitchenette.



- Licensed Rooming Houses – City of Toronto

- Chapter 285 of the Toronto Municipal Code provides a definition for the term “rooming house” and compliance standards for property owners to meet.

Innovative Approaches

- **Sluggett House, Vancouver Island, British Columbia**
 - A 16-unit licensed dementia housing facility with each unit having its own private bed/sitting room and accessible bathroom.
 - Residents who live in the home do not have physical health issues but can no longer live safely in their own home so specialized care professionals are present 24/7 to ensure that residents are in a secure and supervised environment.
- **Tony Wong Place, Markham, Ontario**
 - A 120-unit affordable housing development with 32 units designed for persons with special needs.
 - Organizations that have units for their client groups in this building include Sandgate Women's Shelter, Pathways, CMHA – York Region, Participation House – Markham, and Community Living York South

Questions We Asked

- Are there policy barriers to shared and supportive housing being built?
 - Are there other barriers to this form of housing being built?
- What opportunities are there to enhance / update / create new Official Plan policies to facilitate this type of housing?
- Is there a form of housing that is missing that is more suited to your clients?



General Comments

- In general, the biggest barriers to shared and supportive housing are 'neighbourhood objections' and policy and zoning restrictions
- The challenge is often trying to fit the housing to the zoning permissions as opposed to the needs of the client group
- In general, zoning requirements have not kept up with how people are living now
- Definitions need to be reviewed/updated to ensure they are applicable and relevant
- Official Plan policies should promote public and private sector involvement in the provision of shared and supportive housing

Comments on Rooming Houses

- This type of housing is important for low income singles (including new immigrants, persons earning minimum wage or Ontario works, students etc.) who may rely on this form of affordable accommodation
- There is a need to have standards/regulations in place
 - Regulations are important as many people living in this type of housing don't know their rights and have no protection
- Challenges to operators and residents of rooming houses include:
 - parking
 - waste restrictions
 - lack of privacy for residents of rooming house

Comments on Student Housing

- Difficulties arise when landlords do not live in the premises – other municipalities have licensing requirements for absentee landlords
- Residential zoning would be most appropriate as it will help integrate small scale student housing into the neighbourhood



Comments on Group Homes

- Support service providers agree that this is an appropriate form of housing for most of their client groups
- Having up to 10 people sharing a house makes sense in terms of staffing (economies of scale)
- Development process can be time consuming and expensive
- Providers look for existing homes to renovate as these are usually more affordable, do not require a rezoning, and fit within the neighbourhood context
- Another challenge is to find landlords who would be willing to rent to their clients

Comments on Long Term Care Homes

- Ministry's focus is keeping seniors in their own community and provide supports in their own homes
- There is no new funding for LTC beds, focus is on aging in place
- Definitions/language in Official Plan should be updated
- Policies and zoning should provide flexibility to create needed forms of housing and supports to residents in their community

Comments on Private Retirement Homes

- Often require site-specific zoning in order to build in 'non-institutional' zones
- These homes will soon be regulated by the province (same as Long Term Care Homes)



Comments on Residential Care Facilities

- There are no homes for Special Care or Domiciliary Hostels in Markham
- Focus group participants did not raise issues with this type of housing.



Preliminary Policy To Explore

1. Ensure appropriate, relevant and applicable definitions
2. Ensure policies support diverse range of housing options
 - Include policies to support financial and time-saving incentives
3. Remove policy barriers to housing and care options in residential zones as appropriate
4. Establish guidelines in developing appropriate forms of shared and supportive housing
 - Ensure that this is consistent with Ontario Fire Code and Building Code
5. Evaluate appropriateness of OP requirement of 5% for special needs housing and extend target to the private sector

Next Steps



Overview of Stakeholder Workshop (June 1st)

Goals of the Workshop

- Present findings to date from policy review, community consultation, & research
- Present and get feedback on preliminary policy explorations

Who We're Inviting

- Community agencies
- Town Council members
- Town staff
- York Region
- Central LHIN & CCAC
- Representatives from MMAH, MOHLTC, MCSS
- Developers of shared & supportive housing
- Resident Representatives

Discussion



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