



REQUEST:

Deferral of Municipal Development Fees for Habitat for Humanity Homes Built in the Town of Markham

Background

Habitat for Humanity York Region (HFHYR), a registered charitable organization, builds simple, decent and affordable homes in partnership with the community and with the families who will own them. All homes are built almost completely by volunteers using building materials, land and money donated by individuals, businesses, and various community groups. One hundred percent of all financial donations contribute to the build fund, as all administrative costs are covered by ReStore operations.

Families purchase their home from Habitat and make monthly payments on their no-interest mortgages over a maximum 35 year period. In addition, families are required to complete a minimum of 500 hours of 'sweat equity' by volunteering to help build their own home, other Habitat homes or helping us in other ways. The Habitat approach provides families with a hand up, not a hand out.

Habitat for Humanity York Region is an affiliate of Habitat Canada since 2001, with our first home dedicated in 2002. Since then Habitat York Region has dedicated a total of 9 homes here in York Region and 3 homes internationally, and is currently engaged in its tenth project; the restoration and dedication of Historic Hawkins House in Markham, Ontario.

The goal for 2012 is to implement an operating model that enables HFHYR to consistently enrich the lives of 10 partner families per year on average, through home ownership.

The availability of affordable land in York Region remains a key obstacle in achieving this goal, and HFHYR requests that individual municipalities therein assist in reducing land acquisition costs by waiving all development fees Habitat for Humanity homes built within York Region.

Specifics of Recommendation

Habitat for Humanity York Region respectfully requests the following:

- All Municipal development fees be deferred for all new residential construction projects initiated by Habitat for Humanity York Region
- Development fees will be deferred until the point if the residential unit is occupied by a non-Habitat family (i.e. the fees will effectively be waived while a Habitat family (either the original homeowner or a subsequent purchaser) owns the home

The deferral of these fees, which comprise a significant portion of the Habitat acquisition and build costs, will effectively enable Habitat to divert funds to additional home builds, allowing the Region and municipalities to address the growing need for low-income housing.

The deferral of development fees will be appropriately disclosed in the Region/Municipality and Habitat for Humanity financial statements as an outstanding receivable/liability at the time of deferral, and remain as such until the lesser of 35 years or the residential unit is no longer owned by a Habitat for Humanity partner family.