

Clause No. 6 in Report No. 5 of the Community Services and Housing Committee was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting on June 22, 2006.

6**HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN
FOR THE RENTAL COMPONENT OF THE
CANADA-ONTARIO AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM**

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 25, 2006, from the Commissioner of Community Services, Housing and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Housing Delivery Plan (*see Attachment 1*) be approved for submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing by June 30, 2006 as required by the Province to participate in the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP).
2. A two-stage Request for Proposals (RFP) be conducted. The first stage of the RFP will be issued to assess community capacity to deliver affordable rental housing under the proposed Housing Delivery Plan and results will be reported back to Council in September 2006.
3. The Regional Clerk forward this report and the Housing Delivery Plan to local municipalities, MPs and MPPs and all stakeholders who participated in the consultation process for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for a Housing Delivery Plan which represents a best efforts approach by the Region to generate community interest and creativity in the delivery of affordable rental housing units under the AHP. The Plan is required by the Province by June 30, 2006 as a condition of participating in the Program. The report also discusses a two-stage RFP process, allowing the opportunity to determine community interest and develop a short list of projects for consideration.

3. BACKGROUND

In May 2002, the federal and provincial governments signed an agreement to provide \$245 million in federal funding for affordable housing development in Ontario. The Program was not well subscribed for various reasons, including inadequate funding from the two levels of government requiring significant equity contributions by municipalities and others, a requirement by the Province for Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM's) to provide a blanket indemnification for third party projects, and a lack of rent supplement funding dedicated to the units which made it difficult to serve those households with the greatest need.

Given these limitations the Region applied for funding for only three projects, all of which were Housing York Inc. proposals. These included Armitage Gardens in the Town of Newmarket (58 units), the Sutton Multi- Service Youth Centre in the Town of Georgina (10 units), and the Blue Willow Terrace seniors' project in the City of Vaughan (60 units) for a total of 128 units.

In response to broad criticism, and the lack of take-up of the program, the Federal and Provincial governments announced in April 2005 that they had agreed to significantly revise the Program and provide additional funding. Each level of government agreed to contribute \$301 million for the next four years toward a broader range of affordable housing programs.

In August 2005, the Province announced preliminary program details and dollar/unit allocations for CMSM's for two components of the Program. York Region received an allocation of \$25.9 million for 370 units under the Rental Housing Component and a \$1.65 million allocation for 110 units under the Housing Allowance Program. Details of these programs were reported to Council at its October 2005 meeting.

As discussed in a further report to Council at its November 2005 meeting, the Province indicated CMSM's would be required to submit a Housing Delivery Plan (the Plan) in order to participate in the Rental Housing Component. Although complete guidelines have still not been received, the Province has indicated the Plan must be submitted by June 30, 2006. Further, the Province has now indicated that the CMSMs are expected to meet the following key dates:

- August 15, 2006 CMSM procurement process initiated i.e., RFP issued.
- January 31, 2007 MMAH to receive CMSM approved projects.
- March 15, 2007 MMAH issues Conditional Letters of Commitments.
- September 2007 CMSH-Proponent Contribution Agreements in place.

Although there are sufficient program details to broadly strategize a delivery plan, should Regional Council choose to participate in the Program, there is currently insufficient and incomplete details to allow a full analysis of legal and financial implications that could arise from the Program. This analysis will be completed when these details are received from the Province and is expected to form part of the report back to Council in September 2006.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Considerations Related to Developing the Housing Delivery Plan

4.1.1 Program Details

The elements of the Rental Housing Component which most bear on the development of a Plan are outlined below:

- Average funding of \$70,000 is available for each affordable rental housing unit. If a project does not require the full \$70,000 per unit funding, the remaining funds could be shifted to another project that could receive more than \$70,000, or more units could be created.
- Funds can be used to construct new units, buy existing projects, create second suites, or convert non-residential space to affordable rental accommodation. Some of these procurement options are less costly than others. This could allow for the shifting of funds among projects as described above.
- Of 370 units allocated to York Region, 52 must be targeted to those suffering from mental illness; 10 units must be allocated to those having a dual diagnosis of mental illness and cognitive impairment, and 38 must be targeted to victims of domestic violence. The Plan will need to consider the methods by which these targets can be met.
- Initial average rents in each housing development cannot exceed 80% of the Average Market Rents (AMR) published annually by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for each municipality.

4.1.2 Required Elements of the Plan

The Province has indicated the Plan must have the following elements:

- An indication of how different tenant groups will be served.
- Criteria to determine tenant eligibility regarding in-coming household income limits.
- Targeted rent levels and whether these rents are inclusive or exclusive of utilities.
- Eligibility of proponents and households.
- An outline of different types of development which will be used to deliver allocations, including a strategy for meeting required supportive unit targets.
- An indication of intended municipal contributions.
- Information on the project selection and procurement process.

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- An indication of how the municipality could benefit from participation in the Program.
- Plans for compliance with municipal planning approvals and with goals and requirements of the Province's growth plan.
- A preliminary timeline for implementation of the AHP.

4.1.3 Underlying Principles of the Plan

Council approved the Region's Housing Supply Strategy on June 27, 2002 through the adoption of Clause 5 of Report No. 5 of the Regional Community Services and Housing Committee. The underlying principles of this strategy, as outlined below, were fundamental in developing this Plan.

- Permanent/ long term affordability.
- Integration of housing into the broader community.
- Focus on modest housing form.
- Intensification along Regional Centres and Corridors.
- Linking housing to transit, employment, and proximity to services such as shopping and healthcare.
- Serving households on the Social Housing Waiting List.
- Local municipal support for housing initiatives.
- Regional contributions will be secured in a way to achieve public accountability.

Additionally, the following two principles were used to guide the development of the Plan.

1. Leveraging, to the extent possible, limited Regional financial resources.
2. Maximizing the use of federal and provincial funding.

4.1.4 Environmental Considerations

In order to frame the Region's approach to the Plan, it is necessary to understand the environmental considerations that could impact on the production of affordable housing within the proposed AHP program structure.

- Recent studies commissioned by the Region, including, *Housing and our Economy*, *Remaining Competitive*, the *Employer Opinion Survey*, and *A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population* published in 2005 indicate a growing need for affordable housing in the Region to allow future economic prosperity.
- There has been little affordable rental stock built in York Region in the ten years since the cancellation of housing development programs by the federal and provincial governments.
- York Region has a limited supply of rental stock with one of the lowest vacancy rates in the Province.

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- Interest rates remain at historically low levels, facilitating the production of affordable housing; however, this is offset by historically high construction costs.
- Program timelines require that all new units be built and ready for occupancy by 2010. Eligible projects would need to have appropriate zoning and servicing capacity in place.

4.2 Process for Completing the Plan

The Region retained a consultant with extensive experience working with the affordable housing sector and facilitating the gathering of input from a wide range of stakeholders to aid in the development of the Plan. As well, local municipalities were consulted through the staff Inter-Municipal Working Group for Affordable Housing.

Other stakeholders, including non-profit groups, members of the Alliance to End Homelessness, private developers, and support agency groups were also consulted through separate focus groups. Feedback from these sources has been incorporated into the Plan. A list of those groups that attended the consultation sessions is contained in the Plan. Several of these groups expressed an initial interest in investigating the development of projects under the Program.

4.3 Overview of the Plan

An overview of the Plan follows. The entire Plan including full recommendations is attached to this report.

4.3.1 Tenant Targeting

As indicated in the Plan, there is a requirement to allocate units for those suffering from mental illness (52 units) those having a dual diagnosis (10 units) and those who are victims of domestic violence (38 units). Housing proponents will be encouraged to form partnerships with support agencies in the community in order that the overall program intent to house these groups is respected.

Additionally, the Province has encouraged targeting for other groups for the remaining 270 units, including the physically disabled, recent immigrants, seniors, aboriginals, and the working poor. Focus group participants indicated there is a need for housing for further groups in York Region including youth, single parents, and persons with chronic illnesses. All of these groups are represented on the Region's social housing Centralized Wait List.

It was concluded that preference should be given to those projects proposing to house those that broadly reflect the household types on the Region's social housing Centralized Wait List.

4.3.2 Household Eligibility

Program guidelines indicate that households must be initially income tested to ensure that only moderate and low income households are housed. The basis of the incoming rent calculation is the AMR as published annually by CHMC. As recommended in the Plan, all incoming tenants should have incomes below the level whereby they would be paying 30% of their income on rent.

4.3.3 Targeting Rent Levels

As discussed in the Plan, the rent structure of projects built under the Program could be complex. If rent supplement funding is made available, tenants will be expected to pay no more than 30% of their income for rent, including utilities. However, if no rent supplement funding is available, proponents may need to consider rents at levels that may not fully accommodate the tenant's ability to pay rents at only 30% of their household income.

While the overall program requirement is to have initial average rents not exceed 80% of CMHC's AMRs, many of the mandated target groups do not have the household income to pay these rents. As such, AHP proponents will be encouraged to reserve a minimum of 25% of their units at rent levels these groups can typically afford.

4.3.4. Proponent Eligibility

Non-profit, co-operative, and private developers are eligible to receive funding under the Program. Eligible proponents will need to demonstrate experience in the development and management of affordable housing or partner with those that have this established track record. Proponents will also need to demonstrate they meet financial capacity and capability standards.

4.3.5. Project Eligibility

It is suggested that preference be given to projects which meet Regional objectives such as increased intensification along centres and corridors and those that conform to good urban and planning design principles.

The overall consensus among stakeholders is that York Region should use its best efforts to deliver the remainder of the units through a broadly based Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The process should allow proponents enough time to explore a wide variety of partnerships within the array of procurement techniques allowed. Should this prove unsuccessful, the Region could consider allocating additional units to HYI (135 units are currently estimated for HYI as outlined in the Plan).

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4.3.6. Selection Process

In order to meet the intent of the Province's request for CMSMs to initiate RFP processes by August 15, 2006, it is recommended that the Region conduct a two-stage RFP process. The first stage would ask the community to respond to an Expression of Interest (EOI) during the summer of 2006. The results of this first stage RFP would be reported to Council in September 2006, with short-listed proposals approved by Council being asked to supply more detailed information in the second stage of the process. Project approvals would occur in early 2007.

This process will allow community groups sufficient time to adequately assess their options and to more fully determine their capacity to build units under the Program.

Staff will also report to Council in September 2006 on the results of a review of the Program legal agreements and financial and legal implications based on additional details expected from the Province. The decision to move forward to the second stage of the RFP process will be based on Council's approval of this review.

4.3.7. Municipal Contributions

Municipalities participating in the Program are required to have equalized property tax rates between single family homes and multi-residential units. This is the case in York Region.

Additionally, Council passed a by-law in 2003 to allow grants to eligible non-profit groups building affordable rental units, in the amount of Regional Development Charges paid. It can be expected that proponents under this program would request these funds.

Local municipalities have given grants and some relief from Development Charges for affordable housing projects developed in the past several years by the Region. Proponents will be encouraged to approach local municipalities to secure contributions in addition to those provided by the Region and to confirm their support of proposed projects.

4.3.8. Estimated Timeline for Implementation of AHP

As discussed above it is recommended that the Region engage in a broadly based two-stage RFP process in the timelines noted in the following table:

Table 1
Anticipated Timeline for AHP Delivery

| Milestones | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009/2010 |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Request for Proposals | Stage 1 Release - Summer 2006 | Stage 2 Approvals – Early 2007 | If necessary, issue second RFP. Possible reallocation of units to HYI. | |
| Funding Commitments | 50 units HYI-Stickwood Walker Farm (Strong Start) | 235 units private/non-profit 85 units HYI-Vaughan Civic Centre | | |
| Construction Starts | 50 units HYI-Stickwood Walker Farm (Strong Start) | | 85 units HYI-Vaughan Civic Centre | |
| Construction Completions | | 50 units HYI-Stickwood Walker Farm (Strong Start) | | 85 units HYI-Vaughan Civic Centre 235 units private/non-profit |

4.4 Approach to the Housing Delivery Plan

Several of the targets outlined in the Province's program guidelines, such as achieving and maintaining allocation targets for mandatory groups, may be outside of the Region's control. As emphasized in the Plan, the Region will use its best efforts to achieve these targets and will not be bound to them where it is outside of its control.

4.5 Next Steps

The following next steps are proposed:

- Submission of Housing Delivery Plan to the Province.
- Issue Stage 1 RFP to determine community capacity to deliver affordable rental housing units under Housing Delivery Plan.
- Assess responses to the Stage 1 RFP.
- Review program legal agreements.
- Report back to Council results of Stage 1 RFP and program legal and financial analysis—September 2006.

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5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Assuming full take up of program units, the administration fee paid by the Province to the Region would be \$366,200, or \$990 per unit. It is anticipated that this would be sufficient to deliver the Program.

As noted in this report, the Region has a policy to provide grants equal to the amount of Regional Development Charges paid to non-profit groups building affordable rental housing. If all 235 units reserved for third party groups are delivered by non-profit groups, and are in apartment form, it could result in a draw on the Social Housing Reserve Fund in the range of \$1.4 million-\$2.2 million. It is not expected at this time that the Region would provide any further financial contributions to these projects. Community groups and others would be expected to provide equity and leverage contributions from other levels of government.

The Region's contributions to the two projects anticipated to be developed for Housing York Inc. are contained in the Region's 2006-2008 Capital Budget.

Council will receive complete details of each project for its approval before they are recommended to the Province.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Generally, this program represents an opportunity for local municipalities to have affordable housing built in their communities. The program delivery process will ensure consultation and co-operation with local municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region has prepared a Housing Delivery Plan, as required by the Province, to participate in the Rental Component of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

The Plan is a best efforts approach to deliver the \$25.9 million and 370 units allocated to the Region under the Program.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the June 7, 2006 Committee meeting.)



2006 CANADA-ONTARIO AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM



HOUSING

PLAN



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

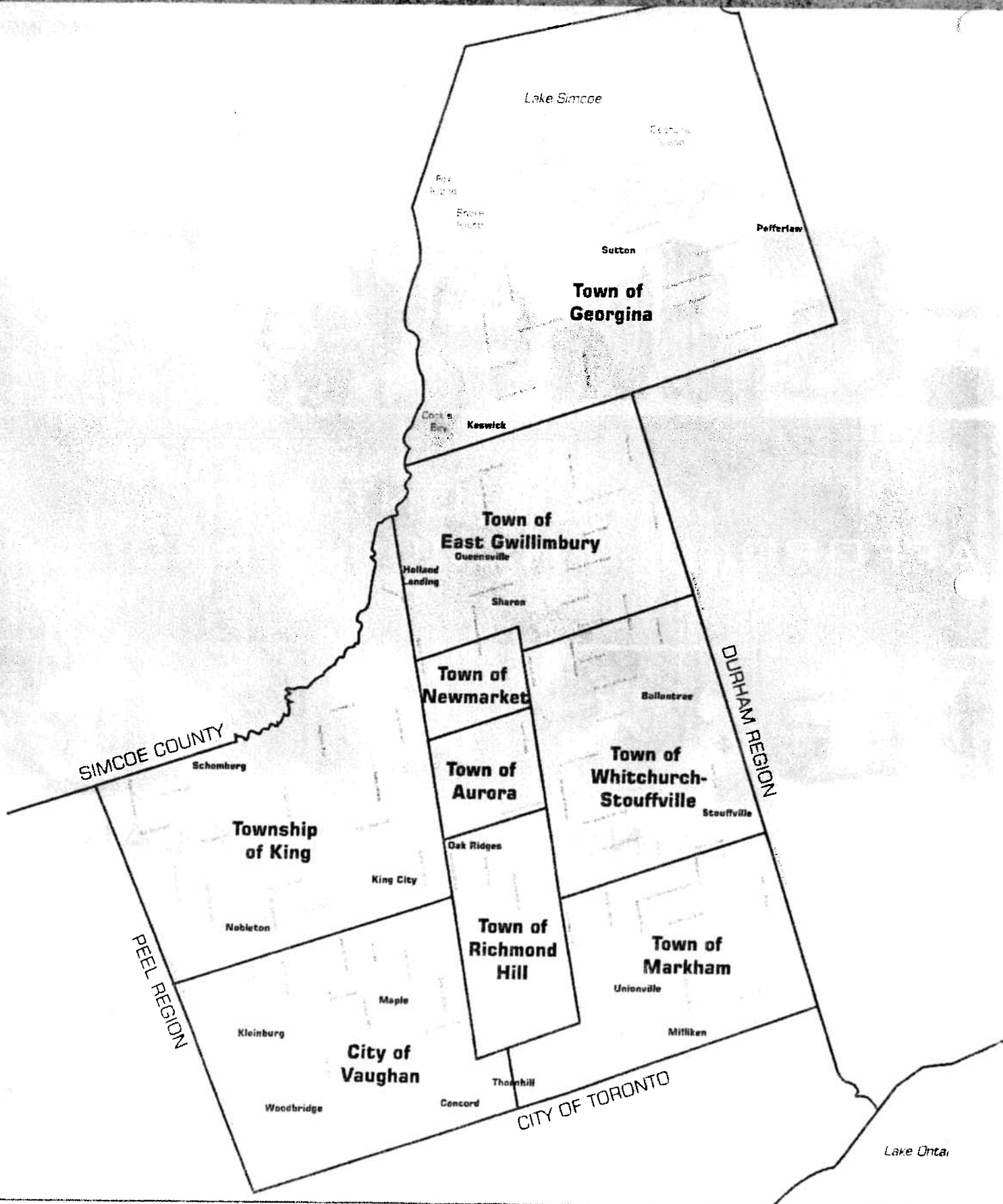


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2005, the provincial and federal governments announced an extension and major revision to the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP). The three major components of the AHP are housing allowances, rental housing and affordable homeownership.

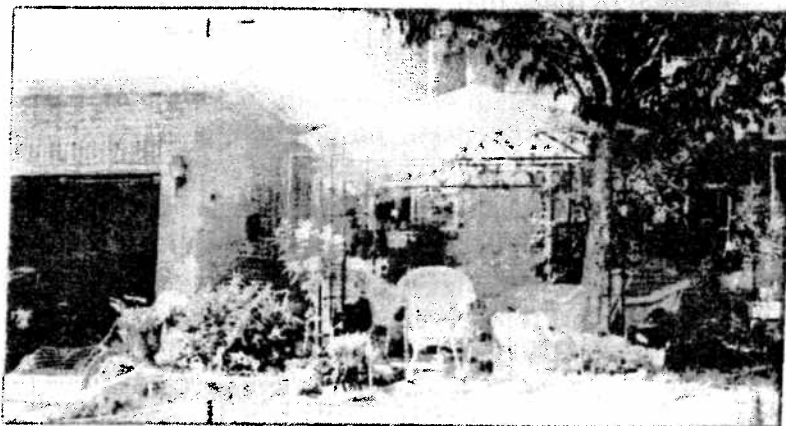
Service Managers interested in participating in the AHP must submit a Council-approved Housing Delivery Plan (the Plan) to the Province by no later than June 30, 2006. The Plan is intended to identify how the Service Manager will benefit from participation in the AHP; Service Manager priorities, housing needs; and target groups for the AHP; and a multi-year forecast of funding commitments, including project construction starts (by units) and project completion (by unit count).

Although a number of challenges have been identified in delivering the AHP (i.e. strict program timeliness, high and rising construction costs and lack of rent supplement funding), there are significant opportunities available. Specifically, new rental units created through the AHP would help address the strong demand for affordable rental housing in York Region. Interest in the AHP has been expressed by both the private and non-profit sector. Historically low interest rates could help make rental housing projects financially viable. Participating in the AHP could also help meet a number of existing Regional objectives related to planned growth.

York Region's Housing Delivery Plan was developed through consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders (see Appendix 1) which include local municipal representatives, housing providers, supportive service agencies, private sector builders and Region staff. **The overall consensus among stakeholders is that York Region should use its best efforts to deliver the AHP through a broadly based Request for Proposal process.**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AHP: RENTAL COMPONENT

- York Region has received an allocation of \$25.9 million to fund 370 rental housing units over the next four years with a requirement to meet the following tenant targets:
 - 52 units for persons with mental illness
 - 10 units for persons with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and cognitive impairment
 - 38 units for victims of domestic violence
- Average funding across all projects of \$70,000 per unit comprised of:
 - federal funding of \$26,600 per unit in the form of a forgivable loan provided during construction
 - provincial funding of \$43,400 per unit in the form of monthly installments plus interest over a 20 year period
- Overall initial rent levels for qualifying projects must not exceed 80% of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) average market rents for the area.



The specific recommendations related to the key elements of the Housing Delivery Plan are outlined below.

MANDATORY TENANT TARGETS

1. AHP proponents will be encouraged to respect provincial mandatory tenant targeting for persons with mental illness or dual diagnosis (up to 17% of tenants) and victims of domestic violence (up to 10% of tenants). The Region may decide to waive or lower this requirement, depending on responses received to its Request for Proposals for affordable housing projects.
2. AHP proponents will be required to obtain agreements from local support service agencies that provide services for persons with mental illness/dual diagnosis to ensure adequate supports are available for these target populations and an appropriate referral process is in place throughout the affordability period. The Region will identify supportive service agencies interested in providing these services in proposed Request for Proposal documentation.

NON DESIGNATED UNITS

3. AHP projects will be required to give priority to households currently on or eligible to be on the Social Housing Waiting List.
4. Preference may be given to those projects that broadly reflect the unit mix need and household types currently on the Social Housing Waiting List.

HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY

5. AHP proponents must verify that the initial household income of eligible tenants does not exceed a factor whereby rents are equal to 30% of household income, as defined by the *Social Housing Reform Act*.
6. To the extent that rent supplements are provided, AHP proponents will be responsible for confirming that households receiving a rental subsidy are being charged rents at 30% of their household income.

TARGET RENT LEVELS

7. AHP proponents will be encouraged to allocate at least 25% of their units at rent levels reflective of the Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) shelter allowance amount. These units would be earmarked for the mandatory tenant targets.
8. Preference may be given to proposals that achieve overall rent levels below 80% of average market rent for the area.

MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS

9. AHP proponents will be encouraged to approach local municipalities to secure contributions in addition to those that may be provided by the Region.

STRATEGY FOR TAKE-UP, SELECTION AND DELIVERY

10. Current York Region estimated targets for the AHP are as follows: 135 units (36%) for Housing York Inc., and 235 units (64%) for private and non-profit developments. These targets are subject to change.
11. Criteria for the evaluation and selection of projects will include site suitability and readiness, building design and unit sizes, proponent qualifications, financial viability, value for money, ability to meet tenant population targets, community support and development plans within AHP guidelines.
12. Requests for Proposals are anticipated to be released in 2006 or early 2007 with construction completion of all projects targeted for 2010.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

York Region faces distinctive challenges in providing human services, including social housing due to its rapid growth, demographic profile, changing population patterns and cost of housing.

York Region is experiencing dramatic population growth. The Region's population has increased from just over 165,000 people in 1971 to an estimated 925,000 at the end of March 2006. In 1997, York Region's share of the population of the GTA was 13.1%. This has increased to 15.8%.

The demographic profile of the Region is also changing. According to 2001 census data, just under 50% of the population of the City of Toronto were immigrants. This compared to 53% for Markham, 48% for Richmond Hill, and 42% for Vaughan. Overall, 39% of the Region's population were immigrants, and 41% reported a mother tongue other than English or French.

Also at the time of the last census, over 70,000 people in York Region were identified as living below Statistic Canada's Low Income Cut-Off limit.

The growth in population and economic need has not been matched by the creation of affordable housing. There has been little social housing built since provincial and federal development programs were eliminated in the early and mid 1990's. Additionally there is relatively little rental housing - often the housing tenure sought by those in need of affordable housing - in the Region. There are few vacancies in the rental stock that does exist.

Market housing in the Region is expensive. In 2005, there were just over 10,000 re-sales of single family homes in the Region with an average value of \$436,000. This compared to about 9,700 re-sales in 2004 with an average value of \$408,000.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In 2002, after an absence of almost 10 years, the federal and provincial governments reconsidered their decision to withdraw all program funding related to the creation of rental housing in Ontario. The result was the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP) to be delivered by interested Service Managers.

This program was not well subscribed, due to nominal provincial contributions, administrative complexity, blanket municipal indemnification for third party projects and limitations in meeting the needs of households on the Social Housing Waiting List. York Region did participate in the pilot project phase of this program by developing three projects comprising 128 units; the Sutton Youth Multi-Service Centre, Blue-Willow Terrace in Vaughan and Armitage Gardens in Newmarket.

In April 2005, the provincial and federal governments announced an extension and major revisions to the AHP.

HOUSING NEED IN YORK REGION

- In 2001, rentals comprised 14% of housing stock in the Region, down from 18% in 1991 and the lowest rate in the GTA.
- The vacancy rate for apartments in the Region was 1.6% in 2005, one of the lowest rates in the Province
- In January 2006, there were 5,500 households on the Region's Social Housing Waiting List.



L.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

The three major components of the AHP are housing allowances, rental housing, and homeownership. York Region's participation in the housing allowances and homeownership components of the program are discussed in separate reports.

The rental housing component of the program provides average funding across all projects of \$70,000 per unit. This funding is comprised of federal funding of approximately \$26,600 per unit in the form of a forgivable loan over 20 years, provided during construction and provincial funding of \$43,400 per unit in the form of monthly installments plus interest over the same 20 year period. Overall, initial rent levels for qualifying projects must not exceed 80% of CMHC average market rents for the area. Generally, rent increases will be limited to amounts allowed under the *Tenant Protection Act*.

York Region received an allocation of \$25.9 million to fund 370 rental units over the next four years under the rental component of the AHP. The allocation includes a requirement to provide 52 units for people with mental illness, 10 units for people living with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and cognitive impairment, and 38 units for victims of domestic violence.

L.4 HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN

Service Managers interested in participating in the AHP must submit a Council-approved Plan to the Province no later than June 30, 2006. The Plan is a statement of the Region's intentions regarding local program priorities and proposed implementation of the AHP in York Region. This Plan addresses the rental component of the AHP, including an identification of support service agencies interested and able to provide support services for people with mental illness and victims of domestic violence.

The Plan sets out the following aspects of the AHP as it is to be implemented in York Region:

- How York Region will benefit from participation in the AHP
- York Region priorities, housing needs, and target groups for the AHP
- A multi-year forecast on funding commitments, project construction starts (by units) and project completion (by unit count).

The Plan includes the following elements: tenant targeting and eligibility, target rent levels, eligible proponents and projects, intended municipal contributions and strategy for take-up, delivery and selection.

1.5 METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN

A broad consultation process with key stakeholders was undertaken between January and March 2006 to obtain further insight into tenant targeting priorities, approaches to meeting mandatory tenant targets, types of potential developments and procurement models, and potential local municipal contributions. These stakeholders included:

- Inter-Municipal Working Group comprised of local planning officials
- York Region Alliance to End Homelessness
- Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Providers
- Private Sector
- Agencies providing support services
- Regional representatives of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOH LTC)
- Regional Staff from Housing, Planning and Development and Finance Departments

This Plan incorporates feedback from these key stakeholders, as well as information on housing needs from existing reports and analysis.

Participants attending these sessions are listed on Appendix 1 of this plan.



2. PARTICIPATING IN THE AHP: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

2.1 OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of opportunities and benefits to participating in the AHP.

First, there is a strong demand for affordable rental housing in the Region as is demonstrated by York Region's limited supply of rental units, low vacancy rates, and the lengthy waiting list for social housing. The AHP provides an opportunity to add to the Region's rental housing stock, which has not seen any significant increase in more than 10 years. To a limited extent, the program also meets the needs of some households on the Social Housing Waiting List, in particular households from the mandatory target groups.

Second, consultation with key stakeholders has identified that there is an interest from both the private and non-profit sectors to participate in the program. Support service agencies are also interested in the opportunity to enhance support services in affordable housing in York Region.

Third, historically low interest rates provide developers with favourable construction financing and take-out mortgage rates which help improve the financial viability of rental housing projects in the long run.

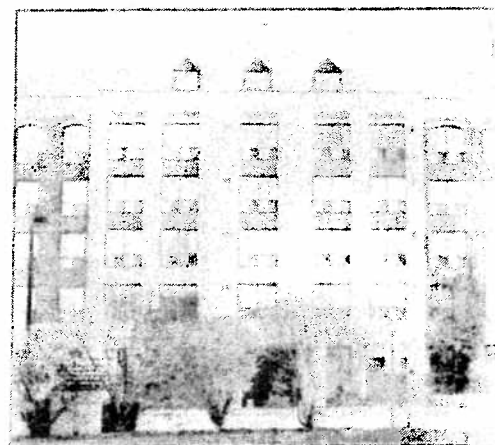
Fourth, the program parameters are consistent with most of York Region's housing development principles.

Finally, participating in the AHP could meet a number of existing Regional objectives:

- **Housing Supply Strategy:** York Region's Housing Supply Strategy identifies a number of action areas, including rental housing, non-profit housing, partnerships, growth management, federal/provincial role and monitoring success. The AHP will help the Region meet some of the elements of its rental and non-profit housing action areas.
- **Growth Management:** York Region's Official Plan calls for the creation of compact, well designed communities in order to protect the Region's agricultural lands, rural countryside and green spaces like the Oak Ridges Moraine. In order to protect these areas, the Region needs to direct a significant portion of its growth to existing urban areas.
- **York Region Centres & Corridors Strategy:** A key part of the Region's growth management strategy is the creation of a system of Regional centres linked by rapid transit in Regional corridors. York Region has designated four Regional Centres: Markham Centre, Newmarket Centre, Bayview Glen in Richmond Hill and the Vaughan Corporate Centre. These centres are linked by the Regional corridors of Yonge Street and Highway 7. Included in the Region's policy on centres and corridors is the promotion of a range and mix of higher density housing options in centres and corridors.

YORK REGION'S HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Integration of housing into broader community
2. Permanent/long term affordability
3. Focus on modest housing form
4. Intensification along Regional centres and corridors
5. Linking housing to transit, employment and proximity to services
6. Serving households on Social Housing Waiting List
7. Local municipal support for housing initiatives
8. Regional contributions secured in a way to achieve public accountability



- **Housing and York Region's Economy:** A 2004 Employer Opinion Survey shows that there are several key elements to maintaining the diversity and skills of its workforce. Key among these is improving the range and affordability of housing within the Region to more closely match the needs of York's labour force.

2.2 CHALLENGES

There are a number of challenges which may impede the full utilization of the AHP.

First, the strict program timeliness require that all new units be built and ready for occupancy by 2010. This most likely means that eligible projects would need to have both appropriate zoning and servicing capacity to be in place. This may be a challenge to accomplish within the next four years.

Second, high and rising construction costs may result in increased equity contributions to ensure that projects are both financially viable and meet required rent levels.

Third, lack of rent supplement funding also means that proponents will most likely need to contribute significant equity to their projects to ensure that some of the units are affordable to those households in greatest need and in particular, for those in the mandatory target population.



3. MINIMUM PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

3.1 EQUALIZED PROPERTY TAX RATES

York Regional Council passed a resolution in May 2001 to decrease the multi-residential property tax rate to equal the single-residential rate for existing properties over a three year period. Since 2003, all existing rental properties are taxed at the single residential tax rate. Property taxes for new multi-residential properties were equalized to the single residential rate in 2001.

3.2 UNIT TARGETS

York Region's targets for the AHP, as prescribed by the province, are as follows:

- 52 units for people with mental illness
- 10 units for those having a dual diagnosis of mental illness and cognitive impairment
- 38 units for victims of domestic violence
- 270 non-designated units

3.3 PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Projects must be selected through the implementation of a municipally approved procurement process consistent with the provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. All projects will be developed in accordance with York Region's purchasing bylaw, which meets the intent of this requirement.

3.4 AVERAGE RENT LEVELS

Projects eligible for funding under the AHP must initially achieve overall average rent levels no greater than 80% of CMHC average market rent for the area.

3.5 MUNICIPAL HOUSING FACILITIES BYLAW

Although it is not a mandatory program requirement, the province has encouraged Service Managers to pass a Municipal Housing Facility Bylaw for affordable housing. Regional Council passed its *Municipal Housing Facilities Bylaw* on December 19, 2002. The bylaw enables the Region and local municipalities, to provide incentives to private and non-profit entities for the creation of affordable housing. The bylaw includes a definition of affordable housing.

Further details on how York Region plans to meet the minimum program requirements are outlined in the following sections.

4. TENANT TARGETING AND ELIGIBILITY

The Province has identified the following target populations for the AHP: persons on or eligible to be on the Social Housing Waiting List, Aboriginals, persons with physical disabilities, recent immigrants, seniors and the working poor. In addition, there are mandatory targets for persons with mental illness/dual diagnosis and victims of domestic violence.

4.1 MANDATORY TENANT TARGETS

The AHP mandatory tenant targets for York Region are: 52 units for people with mental illness, 10 units for persons living with dual diagnosis and 38 units for victims of domestic violence. It is York Region's intention to work with the regional offices of MCSS and MOH LTC and local support service agencies to use its best efforts to put in place a coordinated approach to providing supports for the two mandatory tenant target groups.

4.1.1 MCSS and MOH LTC Funding

Consultation with regional representatives of MCSS and MOH LTC, and key support service agencies, has found that support service funding is already in place, or should be in place, in the near future to provide supports for the identified mandatory target populations.

Local agencies have indicated that they are most likely already providing services to many individuals in the mandatory target categories. Their experience is that many of these individuals are living in accommodation that is unaffordable, inadequate or unsuitable. The AHP presents an opportunity for local agencies to provide support services in accommodation that is better suited to their clients' needs. One key to the success of the AHP in York Region will be to ensure that the rent levels for the mandatory tenant target units are affordable to those on OW and ODSP given that the majority of individuals in these target groups are in receipt of these social benefits. A referral agreement between proponents and mental health support service providers would need to be in place to ensure these mandatory tenant targets are met during the required affordability period.

MCSS has indicated that their priority is for victims of domestic violence in the southern part of the Region, in particular Markham. The use of MCSS support services is voluntary.

MOH LTC is currently working with local support service agencies to secure additional staffing dollars for the provision of services to persons with mental illness and dual diagnosis in their homes. An Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) has been established in York Region to provide outreach services to persons with mental illness on a 24/7 basis. This initiative is to be delivered in the southern part of the Region. Consequently, there is a preference for units to be located in this part of the Region to better utilize existing resources.

4.1.2 Support Service Agencies

The Region has identified key support service agencies interested and able to provide support services for households meeting the mandatory tenant targets. These agencies will be identified in the Request for Proposal (RFP) documentation. It will be the responsibility of the proponent to contact these agencies and agree upon an acceptable process for both parties in fulfilling the program targets.

The following focus group participants have identified an interest in participating in the RFP process. Others will be contacted prior to any RFP as to their willingness to participate.

Serving Persons with Mental Illness/Dual Diagnosis

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) - York Region
- Loft Community Services
- York Support Services Network

Serving Victims of Domestic Violence

- Sandgate Women's Shelter
- Yellow Brick House

4.2 TENANT TARGETING (NON-DESIGNATED UNITS)

York Region's analysis of its Social Housing Waiting List and consultation with key stakeholders builds upon the provincial target populations to identify appropriate targets for York Region.

4.2.1 Social Housing Waiting List

York Region staff conducted an analysis of the Social Housing Waiting List in March 2005. The analysis found that:

- 39% of applicants are family households
- 39% of applicants are seniors households
- 22% of applicants are singles & couples

With respect to income sources of applicant households on the Social Housing Waiting List, the analysis found that:

- About 50% of all non-senior households were employed and 43% received either Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits
- 59% of senior households received Old Age Security benefits, 21% had employment income, and 19% received OW or ODSP benefits

The analysis also found the following regarding waiting times for rent-geared-to-income housing in the Region:

- Unit turnover was between 400 to 500 units per year
- Special priority applicants (i.e. victims of domestic violence) were typically offered units within 3 to 18 months of applying, depending on selected location
- Current waiting times for other rent-geared-to-income housing could be significantly greater than special priority applicants depending on geographic location and specific building(s) identified.

4.2.2 Feedback from Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders identified a number of other target populations that should be given priority in York Region in addition to those already identified by the Province. These groups include: youth, young single women and their children, single parents, persons with addictions, persons with mental health disabilities, persons with chronic illness, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Stakeholders also identified that it is important to include both refugees and landed immigrants under the category of recent immigrants as many landed immigrants have difficulty finding affordable housing in the Region.

Finally, there was a general consensus amongst most stakeholders that given the limited number of units allocated to York Region, prioritizing any one target group is not recommended. However, priority should be given to those currently on or eligible to be on the Social Housing Waiting List, as these identified target groups comprise the vast majority of households on the Region's waiting list.

4.2.3 Recommendations

Recommendations on tenant targeting are as follows:

MANDATORY TENANT TARGETS

1. AHP proponents will be encouraged to respect overall mandatory tenant targeting for persons with mental illness or dual diagnosis (up to 17% of tenants) and victims of domestic violence (up to 10% of tenants). The Region may decide to waive or lower this requirement, depending on responses received to its RFP for affordable housing projects.
2. AHP proponents are required to obtain agreements from local support service agencies providing services for persons with mental illness/dual diagnosis to ensure adequate supports are available for these target populations and an appropriate referral process is in place throughout the affordability period. The Region will identify supportive service agencies interested in providing these services in the Request for Proposal documentation.

NON-DESIGNATED UNITS

3. AHP projects are required to give priority to households currently on or eligible to be on the Social Housing Waiting List.
4. Preference are given to those projects that broadly reflect the unit mix need and household types currently on the Social Housing Waiting List.



4.3 HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY

4.3.1 Rules Governing Access - Mandatory Tenant Targets

As noted above, it will be the responsibility of the proponent to enter into arrangements with support service providers to meet the mandatory tenant(s) with mental illness/dual diagnosis targets. Supportive service providers have indicated that they will require a referring mechanism to match available resources with tenant needs in terms of supportive services and housing.

4.3.2 Household Income Limits

Tenant initial income verification will be the responsibility of the proponent and will be verified by the Region. York Region is responsible for establishing household income limits for the AHP.

The initial maximum rent allowed under the AHP is the CMHC average market rents for the area. As a result, the initial upper end household income limit for eligible projects will be based on these rents, using a factor of 30% of household income as being an affordable rent.

For example, the Average Market Rent (AMR) for a one bedroom apartment in York Region in 2005 was reported by CMHC to be \$851. A household paying \$851 of rent each month and not paying more than 30% of its income for shelter would earn \$34,040 a year. ($\$34,040 \text{ a year} / 12 \text{ months} = \$2,840 \text{ a month}$; $\$2,840 \times 30\% = \851 . Alternately, multiplying the AMR by 40 will achieve the same result; $\$851 \times 40 = \$34,040$). In this case the household should have an initial upper household of \$34,040 if it rents a one bedroom unit at the AMR.

TABLE 1: ILLUSTRATIVE INITIAL HOUSEHOLD LIMITS

| Number of Bedrooms | Average Market Rent | Household Income Limit Based on CMHC Average Market Rents @ 100% |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Bachelor | \$691 | \$27,640 |
| One Bedroom | \$851 | \$34,040 |
| Two Bedrooms | \$994 | \$39,760 |
| Three Bedrooms | \$1198 | \$47,920 |
| Four Bedrooms | N/A | N/A |

4.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations on household income limits are as follows:

1. AHP proponents must verify that initial household incomes of eligible tenants do not exceed a factor whereby rents are equal to 30% of household income.



5. TARGET RENT LEVELS

5.1 CMHC AVERAGE MARKET RENTS FOR YORK REGION

As noted previously, the initial average rent for all AHP-funded units in a project must be at or below 80% of CMHC AMR, with no unit rent exceeding the CMHC AMR for the area. Mixed-use projects with rents higher than this maximum are permissible, but only units with qualifying rents may receive AHP funding.

Establishing and maintaining rent levels in a project could be complex. There are several program requirements to meet, not all of which are complementary. These include having initial 80% AMR; an inability to raise unit rents subsequently, even in cases where there are significant increases in household income; a preference to have some rent at levels that would accommodate mandatory target groups; and the need to maintain on-going project viability.

The following table illustrates possible target rent levels with associated in-coming household income limits. Those tenants who are receiving OW and ODSP payments will have income limits related to the amount of payments they receive under either program.

The table below illustrates various target rent levels.

TABLE 2: ILLUSTRATIVE INITIAL HOUSEHOLD LIMITS

| Number of Bedrooms/ Dependents | CMHC AMR 2005 (Private Apts.) | Incoming Income Limits | 80% of CMHC AMR | Incoming Income Limits | OW Shelter Allowance Max. | ODSP Shelter Allowance Max. |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bachelor | \$691 | \$27,640 | \$553 | \$22,112 | N/A | N/A |
| One Bedroom | \$851 | \$34,040 | \$681 | \$27,232 | \$335 | \$427 |
| Two Bedrooms | \$994 | \$39,760 | \$795 | \$31,808 | \$527 | \$672 |
| Three Bedrooms | \$1198 | \$47,920 | \$958 | \$38,336 | \$571 | \$728 |

Note: It is anticipated AHP guidelines will allow rents to be increased each year by allowable *Tenant Protection Act* amounts.

Many households on the Social Housing Waiting List in York Region will not be able to afford rents at the CMHC AMR levels. Consequently, preference will be given to proponents that agree to provide rents below CMHC AMR.

Separate meters to monitor utility costs and energy efficient features will be encouraged for all AHP projects. Utility costs will not be required to be included in rents charged, where substantive energy conservation measures have been incorporated into the building design.

5.2 RENT SUPPLEMENTS

Strong Community Rent Supplements and other existing rent supplement program funding can be applied to an AHP funded unit. In this case, average rent will be calculated using the actual rent paid by a tenant including rental supplement assistance. At this time, there is no new rent supplement funding available in York Region, however, the Region may reserve the right to require proponents to make a portion of their units available for rent supplements should such funding be available in the future.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations on rent levels are as follows:

1. AHP proponents will be encouraged to allocate at least 25% of units at rent levels at the OW or ODSP shelter allowance amount. These units would be earmarked for the mandatory tenant targets.
2. To the extent that rent supplements are provided, AHP proponents will be responsible for confirming that households receiving a rental subsidy are being charged rents at 30% of their household income.
3. Preference may be given to proposals that achieve overall rent levels below 80% of average market rent for the area.

6. ELIGIBLE PROPONENTS AND PROJECTS

6.1 ELIGIBLE PROPONENTS

6.1.1 Type of Proponents and Allocation of Units

The Region will support a mixed-sector approach to affordable rental housing. Private, non-profit and co-operative proponents will be eligible. Partnership among these sectors will also be eligible.

Approximately 135 units (36% of allocation) may be targeted for affordable housing projects developed by Housing York Inc. (HYI), the Region's housing corporation. The balance of the units, 235 (64% of allocation) could be offered through an RFP process to the private, non-profit and co-operative housing sectors. Housing York Inc.'s units will be allocated separately from the Region's RFP process.

6.1.2 Required Proponent Qualifications

Criteria for selecting proponents include a demonstrated track record in the development and management of affordable rental housing; financial capacity and capability of the developer/owner/partners and affiliates; leadership, experience and strength of a non-profit board; and experience working with selected tenant groups.

6.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

6.2.1 Units

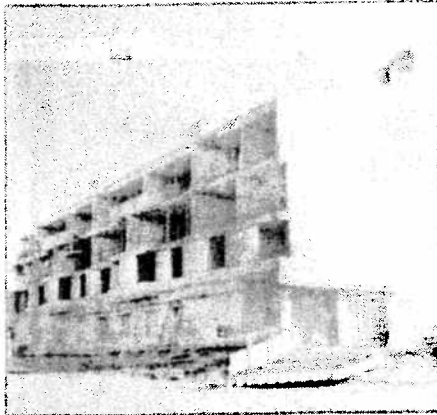
Units eligible for funding under the AHP must be self-contained and be within provincial guidelines for unit size. The Region has not established requirements for size and amenities beyond those specified by the Province.

6.2.2 Types of Developments

The AHP allows for expanded flexibility to create affordable housing including:

- new construction
- renovation, rehabilitation, addition to existing rental buildings
- conversion of non-residential to residential buildings
- creation of secondary suites in ownership housing
- repair to social housing buildings not receiving ongoing federal subsidies in areas where new rental stock is not required

High cost of construction in the GTA means significant equity contributions will be required to help reduce the overall carrying cost of projects to a level where rents do not exceed 80% of AMR. Table 3 highlights the potential costs and required equity for three types of developments: new construction, purchase of existing rental units and second suites.



Blue Willow Terrace



Armitage Gardens

TABLE 3: ILLUSTRATIVE COSTS AND EQUITY REQUIREMENTS OF VARIOUS PROCUREMENT TECHNIQUES

| Cost/Funding | New Construction | Purchase of Existing Rental | Creation of Second Suites |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Capital Costs | \$150,000 to \$200,000 | \$90,000 to \$120,000 | \$15,000 to \$20,000 |
| Federal Grant | \$26,600 | \$17,400 to \$26,600 | \$5,130 to \$6,840 |
| Financing from Rents | \$35,000 | \$35,000 | N/A |
| Provincial Funding | \$43,400 | \$28,520 to \$43,400 | \$8,370 to \$11,160 |
| Equity Required | \$45,000 to \$95,000 | \$9,000 to \$15,000 | \$1,500 to \$2,000 |

Note: Assumes average rent levels of 80% of AMR

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS:

Consultation with private and not-for-profit housing providers identified some interest in the construction of new affordable rental housing under the AHP. There may be some limited opportunities to create a small number of units on existing social housing properties.

PURCHASE OF EXISTING RENTAL BUILDINGS:

Purchase of existing buildings could be a cost effective option for some proponents. There may be a limited opportunity to purchase properties given the limited number of rental units in the Region.

CREATION OF SECOND SUITES:

At this time, the Region does not have a mechanism in place to deliver a second suite program.

7. INTENDED MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS

7.1 REGION

The Region has a policy in place for property tax equivalency of multi-residential with single residential for all new and existing rental housing units.

The Region currently has a policy in place to offset the Regional portion of development charges for affordable/non-profit rental housing.

7.2 LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

As mentioned previously, the Region has passed a *Municipal Housing Facilities Bylaw* enabling municipalities to provide incentives for Regionally funded affordable rental housing development. Local municipalities will decide whether or not they will make financial contributions for affordable housing projects on a case-by-case basis. Proponents will be encouraged to approach their local municipalities to secure additional municipal contributions.

Some examples of possible municipal contributions include:

- Reductions in development charges
- Reductions in other development related municipal fees (e.g. parkland dedication, planning fees)
- Making surplus municipal lands available
- Expediting the approval process

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation on municipal contributions is as follows:

1. Proponents will be encouraged to approach local municipalities to secure contributions in addition to those provided by the Region.

8. STRATEGY FOR TAKE-UP, SELECTION AND DELIVERY

8.1 TAKE-UP AND DELIVERY STRATEGY

York Region plans to use best efforts to take-up all 370 units allocated to it by the province. The units will initially be allocated using the following estimated targets:

TABLE 4: UNITS UNDER CONSIDERATION

| Units Under Consideration for Housing York Inc. | |
|---|------------|
| Vaughan Seniors Project | 85 |
| Tom Taylor Place | 50 |
| Subtotal | 135 |
| Units for Private & Not-for-Profit Projects | 235 |
| Total Units | 370 |

8.2 PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

It is proposed that the Region will conduct a two-stage RFP process. A Stage 1 RFP will be conducted in 2006 to assess community capability to deliver affordable rental housing as described in this Plan. A fuller RFP will be conducted either later in 2006 or early 2007 to select projects for Council's consideration prior to recommendations being forwarded to the province.

Given the opportunities and challenges identified for participating in the program and the Region's housing principles and priorities, the following criteria could be used to evaluate and select successful projects:

1. **Site:** Site is zoned for the intended residential use and the proponent can demonstrate that they already own or have an option to purchase the site. Preference will be given to projects in locations which promote intensification in general and more specifically along Regional Centres and Corridors and locations which link housing to employment and proximity to services.
2. **Building Design & Unit Sizes:** Demonstrate that principles of barrier free design will be incorporated into projects, as well as energy efficiency and good quality construction. Unit sizes shall conform with provincial requirements. The degree to which proposals demonstrate conformance to good urban planning and design, as well as integration into the broader community will be considered.
3. **Proponent Qualifications:** Proven track record in developing and managing affordable rental housing projects, financial capability and capacity of the developer/owner/partners and affiliates and experience working with the tenant target populations.
4. **Financial Viability and Value for Money:** Demonstrated ability to secure construction and take-out financing, as well as required equity and municipal contributions (where possible). Demonstrated operational financial viability of housing project, including adequate capital replacement contributions. Permanent or long term affordability.
5. **Tenant Population Targets:** Confirmation that the proposed housing will serve households on or eligible to be on the Social Housing Waiting List and the extent to which the two mandatory tenant targets will be met, including possibly providing rents at the OW and ODSP rates. Degree to which other target populations will be served and an assessment of affordability achieved in relation to the funding provided will also be considered.

6. **Community Support:** Demonstrated community and local municipal support for the proposed project will be considered.

7. **Development Plan:** Proposed timeliness within the AHP requirements.

8.3 TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AHP

The Region estimates the following timeliness for the Implementation of the AHP.

TABLE 4: ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR AHP DELIVERY

| Milestones | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009/2010 |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Request for Proposals | Stage 1 Release Summer 2006 | Stage 2 Approvals Early 2007 | If necessary, issue second RFP Possible reallocation of units to HYI | |
| Funding Commitments | 50 units HYI - Tom Taylor Place (Strong Start) | 235 private/non-profit units 85 units HYI - Vaughan Civic Centre | | |
| Construction Starts | 50 units HYI - Tom Taylor Place (Strong Start) | | 85 units HYI - Vaughan Civic Centre | |
| Construction Completions | | 50 units HYI - Tom Taylor Place (Strong Start) | | 85 units HYI - Vaughan Civic Centre 235 private/non-profit units |

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations on the Region's strategy for take-up, selection and delivery are as follows:

1. Estimated targets for the AHP are as follows: 135 units (36%) Housing York Inc., 235 units (64%) private and non-profit developments.
2. Criteria for the evaluation and selection of projects will include site suitability and readiness, building design and unit sizes, proponent qualifications, financial viability and value for money, ability to meet tenant population targets, community support and development plan within AHP guidelines.
3. A Stage 1 RFP is planned for 2006, to be followed by a fuller RFP anticipated to be released in late 2006 or early 2007 with construction completion of all projects targeted for 2010.

APPENDIX 1

PARTICIPANTS

Addiction Services for York Region
Aids Committee of York Region
Affordable Property Management Inc.
Ahmadiyya House of Peace
Calvary House
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Canadian Mental Health Association
Community Legal Clinic of York Region
Crosslinks Housing and Support Services/Loft Community Services
Coalition for Affordable Housing York Region
DeLuca Group
Habitat for Humanity
Ja'Fari Islamic Housing
Jubilee Gardens Non-Profit Housing Corp
Kitchen Breendon Manor, Schomberg Lions Club Non Profit Housing Corporation
Lance Krasman Centre for Community Mental Health
Markham Interfaith Coalition for Affordable Housing
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
My Canada! Integration SS
Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region Inc.
Kehilla Residential Services
Rose of Sharon
Royal Oak Court
Salvation Army
Sandgate Women's Shelter
TACC Developments
Toronto Ling Liang Church
Unionville Home Society
Yellow Brick House
York Support Services Network
York Region Alliance to End Homelessness
York Region Food Network