

The Regional Municipality of York

Housing York Inc.
June 15, 2017

Report of the
General Manager

Enhancing Housing York's Parking Practices

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. Purpose

This report provides an interim update on Housing York's parking practices and outlines next steps to prepare an updated parking policy for Board consideration in the fall.

3. Background

Housing York provides tenant, accessible and visitor parking at all properties

Tenant parking opportunities vary by location. Townhouse units typically include a garage and driveway and the exclusive use of these parking areas is included in the tenant's lease. Tenants in apartment buildings or townhouse units that do not have garages or driveways can rent a parking space, subject to availability.

All Housing York properties provide accessible parking for people with disabilities and visitors' spaces in accordance with local requirements. Visitors' spaces are used by tenants' guests and support service providers, building contractors and Housing York staff working on-site. Tenants are not permitted to park in visitors' spaces.

Tenants with vehicles must comply with Housing York's parking requirements

Tenant vehicles parked on Housing York property must:

- be registered in the tenant's name and at the building's address
- have a current license plate sticker, be roadworthy, and properly insured
- not have a registered gross weight of more than 3,000 kilograms

Tenants who rent a parking space must display their Housing York Parking Permit.

Housing York engages parking enforcement companies to monitor sites where parking issues have been identified. Improperly parked vehicles may be ticketed or towed.

4. Analysis and Implications

Some Housing York properties do not have parking spaces available for every rental unit

Housing York owns seven townhouse sites. These properties generally have at least one parking space per unit. Townhouse sites that do not include private driveways typically have adequate surface parking to satisfy tenant parking needs. Thornhill Green, discussed in greater detail below, is the only townhouse community where tenant requests for parking for a second family vehicle have resulted in a waiting list.

The tenant parking supply varies across the apartment sites. Newer mixed population buildings like Mackenzie Green and Tom Taylor Place have a parking space for most, if not all, units. Newer seniors buildings tend to have slightly less than one parking space per unit. As not all tenants have cars, particularly in seniors' buildings, the parking supply in most locations is adequate.

Parking supply is limited in seniors buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s

Parking supply is a challenge in Housing York's oldest seniors' buildings. These buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s under federal/provincial housing programs that permitted only 0.5 parking spaces per senior's unit. Over time, some spaces were lost to provide for the larger accessible parking spaces.

Over the past ten years, each of these sites has been assessed and, as part of parking lot replacement projects, maximized to ensure that as many parking spaces as possible are provided. Some of these communities are located near public parking areas, mitigating the need for visitors parking.

Even with these mitigations the limited parking supply impacts waiting list applicants. When a vacancy occurs, if no parking space is available, the unit is offered without parking. Applicants with a vehicle may decide to give up their vehicle and accept the unit, or wait until a vacancy occurs when parking is available. Sometimes applicants accept a unit without a parking space and then, after moving in, ask to be put on a waiting list for a parking space. Although we have to offer units multiple times we do not have vacancies as a result of the shortage of parking.

Fairy Lake Gardens and Founders Place parking challenges result from historical low parking ratios

Both Fairy Lake Gardens and Founders Place were built with 0.5 parking spaces for every senior's unit. Neither site has space to create new parking spaces. These buildings are located in an area of Newmarket where there is a high demand for public parking, so there are limited visitor parking opportunities near the building.

Tenants and their families have expressed concern about access to visitor parking on-site, particularly for visiting caregivers.

Table 1 provides details about the parking supply at Fairy Lake Gardens and Founders Place.

Table 1
Parking Supply Challenges at Fairy Lake Gardens and Founders Place

Property	Number of Units	Number of Tenant Spaces	Number of Visitor Spaces	Parking Wait List
Fairy Lake Gardens (Senior, Newmarket)	153	61	7	3
Founders Place (Senior, Newmarket)	100	46	7	1

Parking supply is a challenge at the Richmond Hill Hub, and there is a waiting list for a second family vehicle parking space at Thornhill Green

The Richmond Hill Hub is located on the Yonge Street Regional corridor. Because of its close proximity to transit, the building's parking requirements were reduced. During rent-up, tenants were informed that parking availability was very limited and many tenants accepted units without parking. Despite the proximity to transit, tenant demand for parking has been high. Housing York has contacted property owners located close to the Richmond Hill Hub to explore off-site parking options for tenants who are able to walk from off-site parking locations. Unfortunately, the search was unsuccessful.

The lack of parking presents a marketing challenge when a vacancy occurs at the Richmond Hill Hub. Most potential market rent tenants are looking for units with a parking space. As this is not a designated seniors' building, many of the applicants on the subsidized housing waiting list have also indicated they want a unit with parking. With 30 existing tenants on a waiting list for a parking space, policy guidance is needed to balance the needs of existing tenants and to ensure that vacant units are re-rented in a timely manner, with consideration to fairness for subsidized housing waiting list applicants.

Parking pressures at Thornhill Green result from households requesting more than one parking space. Street parking is available for visitors. There are currently 1.3 tenant parking spots per residential unit at this location. Prior to Housing York's 2011 acquisition of the property, all units were assigned a parking space in their rental agreement, whether or not a space was actually needed. As units turnover, spaces not required by incoming households are offered to those on the parking wait list. Parking pressures are expected to decrease over time.

Table 2 summarizes the parking supply and waiting lists at the Richmond Hill Hub and Thornhill Green.

Table 2
Summary of Parking Supply Challenges at Richmond Hill Hub and Thornhill Green

Property	Number of Units	Number of Tenant Spaces	Number of Visitor Spaces	Parking Wait list
Richmond Hill Hub	202	92	19	30
Thornhill Green	101	132	0	15*

*Households waiting for a second parking space

Next Steps

Over the next few months, staff will engage tenants at sites with parking pressures. Housing York will partner with York Region Transit to design a tenant survey to:

- better understand their transportation needs
- identify barriers to using transit
- explore interest in innovations like car share programs, and
- explore whether designating a visitor space for short term parking to accommodate drop-off and pick-up would be helpful

The fall parking policy report will also propose a strategy to balance the interests of existing tenants waiting for a parking space and applicants who have requested parking.

5. Financial Considerations

Parking revenues assist in off-setting costs associated with the provision of parking, such as parking patrol and enforcement, signage, repairs, and snow clearing.

Parking charges currently range from \$10 per month at properties in the northern municipalities to \$40 per month for an underground parking space at the Richmond Hill Hub. Parking charge revenues totalled \$245,533 in 2016.

Housing York is also researching social housing and private sector comparators to inform a parking pricing strategy for Board consideration. The proposed pricing strategy will align with the Board's vision and mission for Housing York.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Housing York provides affordable housing in all nine of the Region's cities and towns. Parking at most sites is adequate however there are particular challenges at one site in Richmond Hill, one in Markham and two in Newmarket.

7. Conclusion

Housing York's parking supply is adequate to address tenant needs at most, but not all properties. Over the next few months, staff will explore options to enhance Housing York's parking policy by reviewing its pricing strategy and by engaging tenants and partnering with York Region transit to identify barriers to increased transit use.

Enhancing Housing York's Parking Practices

For more information on this report, please contact Rick Farrell, General Manager, Housing Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext.72091.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Recommended by:

Approved for Submission:

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May 31, 2017

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