



STRENGTHENING  
People, Places  
and Our Foundation



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# Setting Direction

Youth in the Dundas/Mabelle neighbourhood organized the planting of 1,000 tulip bulbs in their community garden.



## OUR VISION

Toronto Community Housing believes social housing is an essential part of building a great city. We believe neighbourhoods thrive when a mix of people from different backgrounds live together in a place they can call home.

Our vision is to contribute to a city where quality, affordable housing is available in vibrant neighbourhoods, where residents are proud of the place where they live, and where people feel connected to each other and their community.

## OUR MISSION

We provide affordable housing, connect tenants to services and opportunities, and work together to build healthy communities.

## OUR VALUES

**Respect** – We respect people as individuals and create environments that foster mutual appreciation, compassion and service.

**Integrity** – We are fair, just and transparent, and our behaviour is consistent with our values.

**Inclusion** – We believe in social justice and benefit from including and considering all people and perspectives.

**Collaboration** – We recognize that everyone’s contribution has value and that we can achieve more when we work together.

**Excellence** – We enjoy our work and always expect the best of ourselves and those around us.

# Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

**E**very three years, Toronto Community Housing brings together residents, staff and the community to generate ideas and priorities for our strategic plan. In October 2009, more than 1,000 people took part in a total of 10 consultation meetings over four days. Their comments and input have helped us to identify three priority areas that we will address over the next three years: strengthening people, strengthening places and ensuring there is a strong foundation in place for good business practices.

This **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** is our roadmap for the next three years. It builds on our vision, mission and values, and is our commitment to the tenants and communities we serve. The plan sets out the framework for our strategy and priorities, and how we will achieve them.

Informing the priorities set out in this plan are the following key commitments to our tenants and the people of Toronto:

- ▶ Provide quality housing in a good state of repair
- ▶ Increase equitable and inclusive life opportunities for tenants

- ▶ Involve and engage tenants on issues that affect their lives
- ▶ Connect tenants to the civic community, social services and opportunities that assist in building healthy communities
- ▶ Create partnerships that advance community development
- ▶ Build organizational capacity to deliver our mandate

We will review the plan each year to make sure we are meeting our objectives, responding to new issues and taking advantage of new opportunities. These reviews will help us to evaluate our performance and report on our achievements.

This year's plan is fully informed through consultations with key stakeholders, and it reflects the choices we have jointly made. The plan is more focused than in previous years. It reflects our commitment to focusing our activities and efforts where they will have the greatest impact—and we fully intend to see it through. This approach will strengthen our ability to deliver the services that tenants need and which the people of Toronto count on us to provide.

We encourage you to read the **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** in the following pages. As always, the involvement of our staff, tenants and stakeholders remains invaluable, both in shaping the plan and carrying it out.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Mitchell'.

**David Mitchell**  
*Chair*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keiko Nakamura'.

**Keiko Nakamura**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Townhouses in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.



#### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS AND INTERNAL MEETINGS**

A series of consultations were held across the city in the fall of 2009. After a presentation from the CEO, the participants broke into small discussion groups that included a mix of staff, tenants and community partners. They shared their opinions about what our top priorities should be for the next few years. This feedback was used to build the plan.



# About Toronto Community Housing

## Who We Are

Toronto Community Housing is the largest social housing provider in Canada and, after New York City, the second largest in North America. We play a key role in providing homes to many of Toronto's most racialized, economically disadvantaged and marginalized residents. At the same time, the people and families who live in our homes represent hope and possibility for the city, and have the ability and skills to contribute significantly to its growth.

We are home to 164,000 tenants, in 58,500 households—about six per cent of Toronto's population. Tenants reflect the city's diversity, which includes age, education, language, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, religion, ethnicity and race, as well as an increasing diversity in lifestyles and values.

Social housing remains a core asset in the City of Toronto. As Toronto grows, it becomes home to the hopes and aspirations of thousands of new Canadians—each facing unique challenges and opportunities as they

transition to their new country. Many new Torontonians now call Toronto Community Housing home.

At the same time, for many tenants Toronto may be home, but personal circumstances have had an impact on their ability to retain and maintain their housing. Many tenants wrestle with life's challenges and may become vulnerable to losing their housing,

particularly at times of crisis. We support these tenants by improving our ability to connect them to the services they need. We work closely with tenants, stakeholders, community organizations, service agencies and our government partners to help tenants meet their personal challenges and remain housed, wherever possible.



### OUR PORTFOLIO

Toronto Community Housing's social housing portfolio includes 58,500 units in over 2,240 high, medium and low-rise apartment buildings, and houses within 366 communities across the city.

## How We Work

Toronto Community Housing is more than a landlord. For many tenants, our housing provides stability and the promise of hope, and a safe and secure place to live.

We operate as a business, meeting the financial expectations and obligations of a landlord. Consistently delivering good-quality social housing and customer service to tenants is central to what we do. We also carry a social and community mandate to build strong neighbourhoods and sustainable communities. We do that by going beyond our role as landlord, acting as an agent of social change – be it as a catalyst for new opportunities, a convener of collective wisdom, or as a participant working to build a stronger Toronto. The expectation that we will act as a compassionate landlord is also at the core of what we do.

Our 1,400 employees serve the needs of tenants on a daily basis and continue to be our greatest asset. We work hard to ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities and cultures found in our city. Our employee policies and practices are consistent with our values of respect, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and excellence.

We are proud to have been recognized as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2009 and 2010. We are committed to ensuring the continued health, well-being, participation and development of all staff. This is vital to the delivery of quality services to tenants.

In 2008, we restructured 27 Community Housing Units into 13 Operating Units to better serve the needs of tenants. Offices in the new structure house a community-focused delivery team that includes a Manager, Community Housing Supervisors, a Community Health Manager, Health and Community Safety Promotion Officers, Tenant Services Coordinators and a Customer Service Facilitator. These employees work as integrated teams at the building level to address tenant concerns and ensure that our actions are responsive, reasonable, timely and fair.

Our partnerships are critical to achieving our vision of a prosperous, inclusive Toronto, and they are a critical thread in our city's



Staff at the Central Sherbourne Operating Unit serves neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto.

social fabric. As a social housing landlord, we provide tenants with a home and a place to connect. We also build relationships with our partner agencies to assist tenants to take the next steps toward employment and education and find their way through challenging situations. Partners also help tenants gain access to the information or social services they need.



### PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Our research partnership with the Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD) will move Toronto Community Housing closer to a future in which all tenants and staff, including those with disabilities, are able to fully participate in all aspects of community life. OCAD students are engaging in applied design research projects to recommend modifications to existing buildings, as well as future developments to improve building accessibility. Using an aging Toronto Community Housing building as a case study, the first project focuses on how people navigate in and around the building. The partnership reflects our value of inclusion and our continued focus on removing barriers and enhancing quality of life.

We have had to become a more responsive organization, one that is nimble and adaptable to change. Toronto Community Housing continues its evolution as a dynamic, continuously developing organization that can anticipate and respond to changing

circumstances and lead or participate in initiatives that will benefit the communities we serve. Innovation continues to feed our high ambition as we demonstrate that social housing is an asset and one that should be valued.

#### TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING SUBSIDIARY CORPORATIONS



**HOUSING SERVICES INC. (hsi)** is a leader in providing integrated construction and maintenance services within a facilities management framework to Toronto Community Housing and the multi-residential, commercial, and institutional markets. It integrates people, place, process and technology to deliver innovative solutions that enhance clients' assets. hsi's mandate is to provide consistent customer service excellence and grow through the external market to invest back into Toronto Community Housing. hsi is a subsidiary of Toronto Community Housing that is governed by its own Board of Directors.



[www.hsisolutions.ca](http://www.hsisolutions.ca)

**HOUSING CONNECTIONS** provides a one-stop housing solution for people looking for affordable housing in the City of Toronto, connecting people to homes and providing housing solutions to both tenants and landlords. It provides access to the central waiting list for about 70,000 subsidized rental homes in Toronto, including rent-geared-to-income homes as well as rent supplement and housing allowance homes in cooperatives, private non-profits, supportive housing, Toronto Community Housing buildings and private buildings. Housing Connections is a subsidiary of Toronto Community Housing that is governed by its own Board of Directors.



[www.housingconnections.ca](http://www.housingconnections.ca)



## Our Service Environment

### Economic recovery and affordability

2008 and 2009 were years of extraordinary challenge and change. And although Toronto's economy is beginning to show signs of recovery, the recovery will be slow. Housing affordability continues to decline as house prices climb to all-time highs. The fragile economic recovery has not translated into jobs. Workers are exhausting Employment Insurance benefits and are relying on social assistance.

These economic and social trends set the stage for social housing. These trends have increased municipal, provincial and federal government interest in social housing and, in particular, in Toronto Community Housing. They also have an impact on the needs of our tenants, communities and neighbourhoods. They affect our ability to improve the life experience of the tenants, neighbours, staff and stakeholders and the quality of life in our communities.

### Needs and demands in social housing

Between 2007 and 2009, the active waiting list for social housing (households ready and eligible for housing) grew by 22 per cent. Today, more than 55,000 of the 61,500 total households on the waiting list have requested Toronto Community Housing units. Only about 4,000 households move into our

housing each year. This means even small increases in the availability of social housing have a major impact on those in need.

Since 2006, more than half the households entering Toronto's social housing portfolio have been households with special requirements (such as homelessness, terminal illness or disability, among others), which has created additional service needs. The increasing poverty and support needs of social housing tenants continue to be a significant challenge. This reinforces our commitment to work with our communities and agency partners to support these higher need households. Our agency partners know that stable, affordable housing is fundamental to the well-being of their clients and we know that, as a landlord, we must rely on the expertise of the community sector.

Thus, the environment Toronto Community Housing will be working in over the next three years is one of escalating needs and demands, as well as reduced subsidies and new and increased costs as described below.

### Government support and capital shortfalls

Over the past three years, Toronto Community Housing has received unprecedented government financial support to revitalize communities and undertake overdue building refurbishment to address the years of underfunding by previous governments.

Federal-provincial stimulus funding (over \$118 million approved for 2009 to 2011, plus \$11 million in 2011 expected for renewable energy initiatives) and one-time investments of \$75 million from the City of Toronto and \$34.7 million from the Province of Ontario have enabled us to significantly catch up on our capital repairs backlog. Unfortunately, this limited-time funding is scheduled to end after 2011. The capital repair deficit will grow at a rapid pace if adequate annual investments are not made.

This challenge is not unique to Toronto Community Housing. A recent study by the Social Housing Services Corporation suggests two-thirds of all units in Ontario will experience capital reserve shortfalls by 2012, with an average gap of \$7,684 per unit. While sources of public revenue are retreating, the obligations – both political and legal – to maintain good buildings and deliver compassionate and consistent service to tenants remain a high priority to the public.

At the same time, there are new revenue demands by government. For example, once it comes into effect in July 2010 the new Harmonized Sales Tax will add an estimated \$3.1 million to Toronto Community Housing's operating costs each year.

## Relationship with the City of Toronto

The City of Toronto is our sole shareholder, and we continue to rely on the city as our major funder. This year, demands on the municipal budget have reduced the city's subsidy contribution by \$2.4 million. At the same time, waste collection fees as part of the city's green waste management strategy will rise to \$7.7 million in 2010. Water and energy costs are also expected to increase. These changes make it even more challenging to balance our revenues with expenditures.

## Capital repair and revitalization financing

Toronto Community Housing can create cash flow by investing in buildings and systems to operate them more efficiently. The cash flow finances the debt to further invest in capital repairs and redevelopment. For every \$100,000 annual cash flow we create, we can finance about \$1,000,000 for investment in capital repairs and community revitalization. But we also need substantial capital contributions from the federal and provincial governments to both catch up and keep up with capital repair demands.

## Housing market shifts

How does this affect tenants? The waiting list has grown, yet at the same time our vacancy rate has risen from 2.0 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Shifts in the housing market and demand for rental housing mean that some of our properties no longer meet the requirements of households on the waiting list. One-quarter of our units are bachelor apartments, but demand for bachelors is currently only three per cent of the waiting list.

Vacancy rates are a significant challenge to our business model. A vacancy loss can reduce our rental revenue, which reduces our ability to finance capital repairs or revitalization.

## Building stronger neighbourhoods together

Toronto Community Housing is an important participant in the City of Toronto's neighbourhood-specific approach to building healthy communities. We have at least one building in each of the priority neighbourhoods identified in the city's Strong Neighbourhoods strategy and they share the same risk factors as those neighbourhoods – at-risk populations, lower than average household incomes, high unemployment rates and higher rates of new immigrants. We are working with the city on implementing their Community Partnership Strategy. The strategy aims to support the community-based service system and ensure that appropriate service levels are available in all neighbourhoods.

In the recent *Housing Opportunities Toronto* action plan approved



Tenants work together on their neighbourhood garden.

by City Council in late 2009, Toronto Community Housing is also identified as the driver of community revitalization. Our comprehensive and collaborative approach to revitalization, as developed in Don Mount Court and Regent Park, has the city's support in the *Housing Opportunities Toronto* action plan to blend the revitalization of social, economic, infrastructure and housing elements of successful new neighbourhoods.

Moving forward in 2010 to 2012, we remain committed to running an efficient and effective business, and to working with the City of Toronto as our primary partner in city building to ensure that we can deliver affordable housing and quality services to tenants.

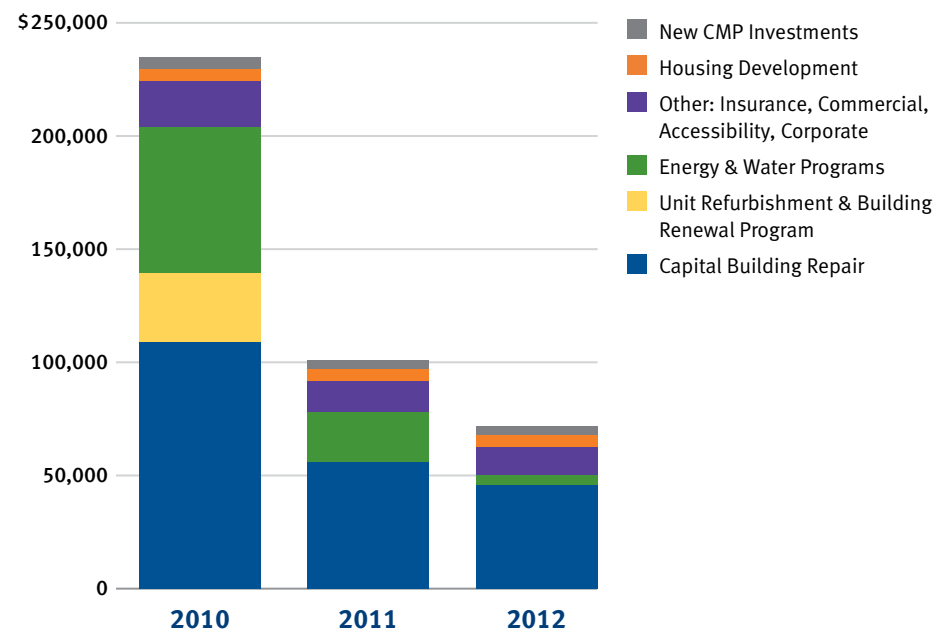
## Financial Summary

Toronto Community Housing has two main sources of revenue – the rent paid by our residents and subsidies from the City of Toronto. Non-rental revenues include parking, laundry, commercial rentals and other activities.

A large portion of our expenses, just over 59%, is relatively fixed – mortgage and debt, taxes, utilities and reserve funds. The remaining expenses include maintenance, managing tenancies, safety and administration. After paying these costs, just under \$60 million remains to fund capital repairs.

REVENUES	2010	2011	2012
IN THOUSANDS			
Rent	268,969	274,028	277,077
Non-rental Revenue	35,197	38,200	43,319
City of Toronto operating subsidies	276,923	284,253	288,477
	<b>\$581,089</b>	<b>\$596,481</b>	<b>\$608,873</b>
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	2010	2011	2012
IN THOUSANDS			
Utilities and Taxes			
▶ Utilities	116,310	120,543	124,328
▶ Property taxes	108,166	110,329	112,536
▶ Waste pickup	7,690	7,844	8,001
Housing Operations			
▶ Building operations & maintenance	90,330	92,570	94,421
▶ Tenancy management	25,806	26,347	26,874
▶ Community support & safety	21,549	21,980	22,419
Other costs			
▶ Corporate services	23,664	24,137	24,620
▶ Other operating costs	7,686	7,775	7,866
Capital plan funded			
by operating cash flow	58,988	64,574	66,921
Net reserve contribution	19,037	16,493	16,583
Debt payments	101,863	103,889	104,305
	<b>\$581,089</b>	<b>\$596,481</b>	<b>\$608,873</b>

INVESTMENTS	2010	2011	2012
IN THOUSANDS			
▶ Capital Building Repair	108,976	56,300	45,800
▶ Unit Refurbishment & Building Renewal Program	30,796	0	0
▶ Energy & Water Programs	64,129	21,826	4,500
▶ Other: Insurance, Commercial, Accessibility, Corporate	20,637	13,895	12,395
▶ Housing Development	5,236	5,341	5,448
▶ New CMP Investments	4,978	3,538	3,778
	<b>\$234,752</b>	<b>\$100,900</b>	<b>\$71,921</b>



SOURCES OF INVESTMENT FUNDING	2010	2011	2012
IN THOUSANDS			
▶ Capital plan funded by operating cashflow	58,988	64,574	66,921
▶ Grants (provincial/city/stimulus)	94,784	31,000	0
▶ Capital carry over	21,870	0	0
▶ Loans and 3rd party financing	59,110	5,326	5,000
	<b>\$234,752</b>	<b>\$100,900</b>	<b>\$71,921</b>

# Strategic Focus Areas

**T**he **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** represents an operational shift at Toronto Community Housing. This year, we developed a more strategic document and moved away from what it has been in past years, which was a comprehensive operational plan. The plan was developed through a community consultation process that gathered comments and ideas from more than 1,000 people. Detailed workplans, targets and milestones are being developed to support this plan; they will ensure that we effectively implement and measure the success of the new strategies. A performance scorecard will be developed to keep us transparent and accountable as we deliver the plan.

The plan acknowledges and responds to the current fiscal reality we are working within, and the need to focus on a few key priorities where we will have the most impact. It does so while establishing a clear vision for our future, linking strategies to desired outcomes and results.

In developing this plan, we focused our strategies by asking ourselves three fundamental questions:

- ▶ What do we do?
- ▶ Who benefits from what we do?
- ▶ How do we ensure we excel in all we do?

The answers led us to identify three areas to commit to:

## Strengthening People

## Strengthening Places

## Strengthening Our Foundation

These areas of focus will guide organizational decision-making over the next three years. Achieving the outcomes set out in this plan will require us to pursue focused strategies that renew our commitment to service through a culture of caring, enable tenants to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to their community, redefine how we partner to connect tenants to social services, and strengthen our business operations.



60 Richmond Street East under construction. Now complete, this 11-storey, 85-unit building was constructed by Toronto Community Housing as part of the Regent Park Revitalization. The award-winning housing co-operative for hospitality workers incorporates social spaces dedicated to food and its production. It is the first building to be part of the Regent Park redevelopment that is not directly managed by Toronto Community Housing, which helps us meet our goal of providing rental housing through a range of management models.

# Community Management Plan 2010-2012 At-A-Glance

## Strengthening People



**OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES**

- Successful Tenancies**
  - ▶ Mental Health Strategy
  - ▶ Seniors Strategy
  - ▶ Eviction Prevention Strategy
- Economic Development**
  - ▶ Economic Opportunities Strategy
- Empowered Tenants**
  - ▶ Tenant Engagement Strategy
  - ▶ Tenant Leadership Strategy

## Strengthening Places



**OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES**

- Well-Maintained Buildings**
  - ▶ Clean Buildings Strategy
  - ▶ Maintenance Strategy
  - ▶ Integrated Pest Management Strategy
- Valuable Community Spaces**
  - ▶ Curb Appeal Strategy
  - ▶ Community Gardens Strategy
  - ▶ Use of Space Strategy
- Enhanced Community Safety**
  - ▶ Community Safety Strategy
- Sound Investments in Real Estate Assets**
  - ▶ Community Revitalization Strategy
  - ▶ Capital Repair Strategy
  - ▶ Environmental Retrofit Strategy
  - ▶ Housing Replacement Strategy

## Strengthening Our Foundation



**OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES**

- Improved Customer Service**
  - ▶ Customer Service Strategy
  - ▶ Customer Supports and Systems Strategy
- Healthy Workplaces**
  - ▶ Succession Management Strategy
  - ▶ Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
  - ▶ Health and Wellness Strategy
- Improved Financial Discipline**
  - ▶ Long-Term Financial Strategy
  - ▶ Business Operations Strategy
- Managed Risk and Effective Governance**
  - ▶ Enterprise Risk Management Strategy
  - ▶ Corporate Governance Strategy
- Better Communications**
  - ▶ Tenant Communications Strategy
  - ▶ Employee Communications Strategy
  - ▶ External Relations Strategy

# Strengthening People

## Outcome: Successful Tenancies

- Mental Health Strategy
- Seniors Strategy
- Eviction Prevention Strategy

## Outcome: Economic Development

- Economic Opportunities Strategy

## Outcome: Empowered Tenants

- Tenant Engagement Strategy
- Tenant Leadership Strategy



The Green Collar Corps is an award-winning environmental education and activism program for in-school youth who live in Toronto Community Housing. Youth like Godwin, Franklin, and Taleisa teach other tenants how to be environmentally friendly.

**P**eople are the reason we are in business. When tenants succeed, we succeed. One of the best ways to achieve success is by supporting tenants in meeting the obligations of their lease and by connecting them with services that can lead to gainful employment, career development and lifelong learning. We demonstrate our commitment to people through our efforts to build the social capital of tenants.

We recognize that some tenants can become vulnerable to maintaining their housing as a result of physical or mental illness, age, frailty or other factors. To ensure that these realities—*mental health, aging with dignity and preventing evictions*—inform our decision-making and operations, we have developed strategies to define our role in assisting and supporting vulnerable tenancies. The multi-year plans take advantage of our organization’s considerable strengths, and they are guided by our determination to work with tenants and



#### **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS**

Each year, tenants decide how to spend \$9 million in capital funding using a process called Participatory Budgeting. Tenants gather in each community to set priorities for capital needs and then select delegates to represent those issues at an area-wide event. There, tenants vote to decide which projects get funding. In 2009, more than six times the number of people took part in the process than ever before.

community partners to address systemic service gaps and keep tenants in their homes.

To support the development of healthy communities and break the cycle of poverty, we promote activities that support the economic and social independence of tenants. Engaged tenants contributing to the success of their communities will generate multiple gains—for individuals, for Toronto Community Housing and how we provide services, and for the neighbourhoods and communities we interact with.

### **Outcome:**

#### **SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES**

By being a compassionate landlord, Toronto Community Housing can make an important contribution to the well-being of tenants who become vulnerable. Many tenants face barriers to full participation in civic, economic and social life, and some may face challenges to maintaining their housing

as a result of age-related, mental health or accessibility concerns. For these tenants, Toronto Community Housing is often their only source of safe and secure housing. We are committed to supporting tenants so they can maintain healthy, successful tenancies.



#### **VULNERABLE TENANCIES**

Many households residing in Toronto Community Housing have characteristics that put them at risk of becoming vulnerable:

- ▶ 24% of all tenants are over 59 years old
- ▶ 28% of households report at least one member with a physical disability
- ▶ 9% of households report at least one member with a mental illness

Furthermore, households are extremely diverse and have different needs:

- ▶ 55% are one-person households
- ▶ 27% are single-parent (female-led) families
- ▶ About 20% are households headed by newcomers to Canada

## Mental Health Strategy

Toronto Community Housing's population of 164,000 tenants includes an estimated 9,000 people living with serious mental illness or addictions. This makes us the province's largest provider of housing for people living with serious mental illness.

People living with mental illness or addictions face stigma and discrimination. These outdated attitudes create barriers to service equity, employment, education, better health and active community participation. They are also barriers to mental health recovery.

In 2009, we completed the Mental Health Framework with the support of several partners and stakeholders. The framework recommends a clear role for Toronto Community Housing in assisting and supporting tenants living with mental illness or addictions—a role that is firmly rooted in our mandate as a social housing landlord. The framework identifies 10 strategies to help build a culture that supports mental health recovery and which provides supports, connections to services, and hope to people living with mental illness or addictions in our communities.

The Mental Health Framework is a long-term strategy; 2010-2012 represents the first three years of this important work, during which time we will:

- ▶ Articulate our role as a caring, compassionate landlord in the business of promoting successful tenancies by assisting tenants in meeting community standards of behaviour
- ▶ Strengthen community partnerships that support tenants living with mental health challenges
- ▶ Increase staff capacity to access, and work with, community partners
- ▶ Create and implement intervention strategies for high-need buildings
- ▶ Develop research and advocacy strategies to tackle the challenge of removing the stigma faced by tenants living with mental illness or addictions

## Seniors Strategy

Throughout our portfolio we operate 66 seniors-designated buildings that are home to more than half of the 26,000 senior tenants (age 59 and older) that reside in our buildings. About 9,800 of them are 75 and older. The Seniors Strategy supports seniors so they can remain in our housing as they age. It enhances our ability to meet the housing needs of seniors.



Senior tenants at 252 Sackville Avenue regularly meet in the lobby to catch up on their day.



Over the next three years we will continue to promote aging with dignity by making support for seniors an organizational priority. We will do this by:

- ▶ Investing in our buildings designated for seniors, to ensure access to adequate housing
- ▶ Promoting the physical health and well-being of tenants
- ▶ Promoting community engagement by enabling connections through partnerships with community organizations that provide seniors support services

#### LESAGE REVIEW

Toronto Community Housing is addressing issues arising from the 2009 eviction of the late Al Gosling through an independent review led by the Honourable Patrick LeSage, QC. The purpose of the review is to strengthen our policies for preventing evictions and our response when tenants are vulnerable.

Through the LeSage Review, we have learned how we can improve our policies and procedures to meet the expectation that we act as a caring, compassionate landlord when tenants are vulnerable. We are implementing changes addressed by the review that will improve communications with tenants, simplify staff roles and procedures, and clearly define accountability.

## Eviction Prevention Strategy

At Toronto Community Housing, we want every tenancy to be successful. We are one of the few housing providers with a policy for preventing evictions. We have an eviction rate for arrears of less than one per cent, which is lower than most private landlords in the city.

Our eviction prevention policy was built on strong tenant input. The policy requires our staff to work with tenants to ensure they meet their responsibilities, and to find solutions to keep tenants housed. Eviction must always be an action of last resort.

Our policies and processes seek to minimize the number of evictions by reaching out to tenants through early intervention, education, communication, and individual payment plans that help tenants stay housed.

Going forward, our strategy will focus on strengthening our practice and clarifying staff roles and procedures to ensure rent is collected from tenants on time. We will do this by:

- ▶ Changing our culture to ensure that staff take the extra step when we see something going wrong
- ▶ Simplifying our processes to provide more clarity around staff functions and systems that encourage accountability
- ▶ Revising the Eviction Prevention Policy to reflect the recommendations of the City of Toronto's Office of the Ombudsman around eviction prevention for non-arrears

We will also improve support for tenants by simplifying the way we communicate with them, and by helping frontline staff to recognize and respond appropriately to the signs that a tenant needs extra support in meeting their obligations under a lease agreement. And we will work to establish and promote partnerships with organizations that can provide support services to tenants.

## Outcome:

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The average annual household income of tenants of Toronto Community Housing falls below what Statistics Canada deems to be the poverty line, and is five times lower than the average for Toronto residents. Toronto Community Housing capitalizes on our ability to make a difference in the lives of tenants by advocating for and enabling connections to labour market, business development and skill-building opportunities. We leverage our relationships and spending power to bring about economic and social renewal of communities where we operate and where tenants live.



This Royal Bank branch in Regent Park is the first bank in the neighbourhood in over 60 years. Regent Park will also see a new Sobeys, a Tim Hortons and a Rogers store open, with each hiring local residents.

## Economic Opportunities Strategy

We recognize that economic and social challenges are interdependent, complex and always changing. Through local action by staff and tenants, we are helping to enhance social conditions by creating economic opportunities in neighbourhoods across the city. Our focus for 2010-2012 will build on our achievements in improving opportunities for individuals and will work toward economic development and renewal of communities.

Our role in this strategy is enabler, facilitator and partner. We will bring our broad network of public, private and non-profit partners together to build cross-sector partnerships that create successful pathways to sustainable community economies.

In addition to partnerships, the core mechanism for delivering economic opportunities is our procurement system. We will leverage the significant value of our contracts with business partners to enable a variety of new economic opportunities. We will also leverage the estimated \$1.5 billion we will spend on buildings and related facilities over the next 10 years as part of *Housing Works*, our long-term strategy for real estate investments.

The economic opportunities strategy includes four priorities:

- ▶ Workforce development
- ▶ Small business development
- ▶ Commercial and business opportunities
- ▶ Housing and physical infrastructure

### Workforce development

We will facilitate workforce development through opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals and communities. In addition to enabling job opportunities for tenants with business partners, we will continue to create educational scholarships, mentorships, apprenticeships and training opportunities that link tenants' skill development with the needs in the local labour market. Each of these opportunities will be funded by business partners and often delivered by community partners.

### Small business development

Small businesses and microenterprises are key strategies for community economic development. They create sustainable tenant income and asset accumulation opportunities for both business owners and employees. We will expand access to capital, business development resources and support services for social enterprises, and will refer tenants to business development programs and resources such as financing and networks for small businesses.

## Commercial and business opportunities

We will also attract commercial and business opportunities to the neighbourhoods where we operate, particularly the revitalization sites. New businesses are a means to accumulate wealth for those that own, and work for, the business. Businesses can also help stimulate the building (and rebuilding) of communities that are creative, inclusive, and sustainable. We will pursue partnerships with other organizations to help turn communities into destinations for businesses to invest, grow and prosper.

## Housing and physical infrastructure

Our focus on housing and physical infrastructure includes creating long-term investment and home ownership opportunities for residents by partnering with government and other organizations and funders. Vibrant neighbourhoods include a variety of individuals with mixed incomes and mixed housing types. People who “move up” need not move out of their community; there are multiple options for remaining in the community even when one’s personal situation changes.

We also recognize that civic infrastructure investments such as public transportation and broadband lines are important parts of building successful community economies. These are long-term objectives that extend

beyond the scope of this Community Management Plan and will require government support to achieve.

## Outcome:

### EMPOWERED TENANTS

Toronto Community Housing staff work with tenants and partners to create conditions for tenants to become actively engaged to voice issues of concern, seek out or advocate for resources, and directly effect change in their communities as residents of Toronto. This results in healthier communities, social development and social inclusion.

When tenants are engaged, we find new ways of working that involves tenants, staff and other stakeholders in creating solutions to problems. It helps us feel the pulse of communities—informing staff of emerging issues, helping us understand local needs, and helping us be more responsive to issues that are most relevant to tenants.

Tenant engagement helps to facilitate the role of tenants as full and active participants in civic life in Toronto and our wider society. Civic engagement provides leadership opportunities that build advocacy skills and enhance problem-solving skills. It enables tenants to address issues beyond social housing that affect their lives, family, community and the city.

## Tenant Engagement Strategy

Our approaches for tenant engagement facilitate tenant decision-making, build relationships, establish trust and develop an understanding of community issues, needs, opportunities and resources. The foundation of the Tenant Engagement Strategy is the Tenant Engagement System. The system includes the following components: building meetings and “cafes,” neighbourhood and Operating Unit councils with special area councils for youth and seniors, participatory budgeting, community animation, workgroups and committees, and issue-based work.

## Local Participation and Decision Making

We will be working to ensure each building has a regular opportunity to meet and resolve issues. Within buildings, building meetings and “cafes” allow tenants to meet with staff to build relationships, share information and resolve issues in the building. Building meetings are more formal and larger tenant meetings led by staff and Tenant Representatives, whereas building “cafes” are informal check-ins or one-to-one conversations between staff, Tenant Representatives and tenant leaders.



### INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY

Each year, we provide \$1 million through our Social Investment Fund (SIF) to support community projects that are selected and led by tenants. We support projects like the Glendower Area Crisis Response Team, a project focused on building the strengths and skills of tenants in order to better serve its community during a crisis. To date the group has received training from various community partners including the City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health and Toronto Police Services, as they continue to build their profile and presence in the city as the first resident-based Crisis Response Team in the GTA. Such projects showcase SIF's commitment to actively engaging tenants in planning, decision-making and in supporting the building of strong, healthy communities.

Neighbourhood, Operating Unit, Youth and Seniors' Councils bring together tenants who were elected to represent their building to advocate for the interests of tenants, address common issues, and participate in decision-making in the community and Operating Unit. We will be strengthening the councils by providing training through the Tenant Leadership Strategy. We will also be developing a more coordinated approach to engaging tenants living in single family homes by identifying their particular interests and needs and developing appropriate methods of communicating and engaging with them.

Through *Participatory Budgeting*—a process of democratic decision-making—tenants decide how to spend part of Toronto Community Housing's capital budget for investments and repairs in their community. We will continue to expand the participatory

budgeting model to include more tenants in decisions and in building community economic opportunities into project implementation.

*Community Animation*, a peer-to-peer approach of training and education, engages tenants to address issues that affect their communities and the city. Through an intensive training course, community animators are provided with skills and tools that they apply toward building partnerships and engaging other tenants to create change in their communities. We will continue to apply the community animation model in green initiatives such as recycling, water and energy conservation. We will also expand the model into our community revitalization program, and make it an essential element of our strategies for community gardening.

### Advisory and Consultation

The Tenant Engagement Reference Committee is an elected group of tenants that advises Toronto Community Housing on tenant engagement issues. Among the committee's recommendations after Toronto Community Housing's 2008 restructuring was to increase opportunities for tenants to provide input into specific areas of the engagement system through working groups and committees. These groups convened for the first time in 2009 and will be supported by staff as they grow and develop over the next three years. In addition, staff brought together youth tenants in 2009 to create the Youth Engagement Reference Committee, which will shape the governance structure of the youth councils.

### Issue-Based Engagement and Advocacy

Through issue-based engagement, Toronto Community Housing creates opportunities for tenants to participate and influence decision-making in systems beyond housing, and to become part of civic life as residents of the city. Issue-based engagement enables tenants to organize, advocate and work with external stakeholders on critical issues that affect their lives. We will continue to support the development of tenant groups such as the Somali Tenants Association, Hispanic Tenants Association, and Anti-Ableism

Committee, as well as support tenants in developing advocacy campaigns such as *Save our Structures*. We will also support tenant groups to become involved in issues of civic engagement, social justice, poverty reduction and food security, by connecting them to advocacy and external networking opportunities.

## Tenant Leadership Strategy

We recognize a need to develop mechanisms to expand opportunities for leadership and engagement beyond the traditional role of elected Tenant Representatives. The Tenant Leadership Strategy identifies opportunities and provides supports for tenants to develop and apply knowledge and skills to achieve the following outcomes:

- ▶ More active participation in their communities and our governance system
- ▶ Increased involvement as a resident of Toronto
- ▶ Stronger connection to community and social networks
- ▶ Better access to services and opportunities
- ▶ Improved influence over decisions that affect their communities

## Learning and Development

We will provide support for training and skills development opportunities for tenants in their role as elected Tenant Representatives and Toronto residents. We will support the development of curriculum through collaboration by staff, tenants and educators and we will facilitate partnerships with

educators and educational institutions to enable the curriculum to be offered in academic settings. Topics will be aligned with tenants' interests and the needs of their communities, such as human rights, governance, community development and civic engagement.



### YOUTH ELECTIONS

On April 8, 2010 Toronto Community Housing held its first ever Youth Tenant Representative Elections. The elections were of landmark importance as, for the first time, young people from Toronto Community Housing were democratically elected by their peers into a formal governance body of elected youth representatives, encompassing an impressive 175 youth on 11 Youth Councils. The inaugural councils will begin meeting in May 2010 and will serve for a 2-year term. They will focus on community building by increasing peer-to-peer interactions, skills development, and organizing youth around issues that affect their communities.

Abdisis Issa, Youth Tenant Representative 2010

# Strengthening Places

## **Outcome: Well-Maintained Buildings**

- Maintenance Strategy
- Clean Buildings Strategy
- Integrated Pest Management Strategy

## **Outcome: Valuable Community Spaces**

- Community Gardens Strategy
- Curb Appeal Strategy
- Use of Space Strategy

## **Outcome: Enhanced Community Safety**

- Community Safety Strategy

## **Outcome: Sound Investments in Real Estate Assets**

- Capital Repair Strategy
- Community Revitalization Strategy
- Environmental Retrofit Strategy
- Housing Replacement Strategy



A high-rise building at 57 Mabelle Avenue.

**W**ith such a large number of houses and apartment buildings across the city, our focus on strengthening the places where our tenants live comes naturally. We want tenants to live in good neighbourhoods and well-maintained buildings. Our places include the buildings and houses that provide shelter to tenants, as well as the spaces such as gardens and playgrounds that make up the diverse neighbourhoods where we operate and where tenants live.

Our goal is to achieve and maintain a good state of repair for our housing. Over the past seven years, with the support of capital grants totaling more than \$239 million from all three levels of government, we have invested more than \$630 million in capital improvements. But there will always be much work to be done.

The outcomes for Strengthening Places establish priorities for improving the look, feel and function of the buildings, green spaces and other amenities within Toronto Community Housing. The strategies outline how we will improve the impact that buildings have on the environment and surrounding neighbourhoods. Improving places is the first and most important step in improving the living conditions and quality of life for all tenants of Toronto Community Housing.

## Outcome:

### WELL-MAINTAINED BUILDINGS

Ensuring that tenants are housed in clean, well-maintained buildings supports our focus on strengthening housing quality, tenant satisfaction and standard of living. While many of our buildings are maintained very well, others need more attention to meet our standard.

In 2010 and beyond, we will further support this objective through an enhanced maintenance strategy, a clean building strategy and an integrated pest management strategy. We will support these investments with tenant-focused communication systems. We appreciate that tenants expect clean buildings as a basic service and that they need to be kept informed about maintenance plans, cleaning routines and schedules, so they will know what to expect from us.

### Maintenance Strategy

The quality of repairs to buildings matters to tenants and staff. Maintenance and repairs should be timely and done right the first time. This includes emergency repairs, which often occur outside regular business hours. We need to be clear about how we respond to tenants in need.

We will improve maintenance by setting clear roles and responsibilities, monitoring



Cleaning and preparing a vacant unit for a new tenant in the Pelham Park townhomes.

performance more closely and communicating results to tenants and staff more regularly.

We will increase organizational oversight by implementing standard operating procedures and assigning accountability for maintenance to supervisory staff. We will strengthen staff routines by continuing and expanding the preventative maintenance program, as well as clarifying staff, vendor and management roles and responsibilities during the move in/move out process. We will also ensure staff have the ability to perform certain routine repairs, which lessens dependence on outside contractors.

To ensure consistent service from contractors and contract-managed buildings, we will develop and enforce service standard agreements with all maintenance vendors. We will also develop quality control measures for outside contractors that are built into the vendor selection and evaluation process.

Finally, we will improve communications with tenants about maintenance issues by using venues such as building “cafes,” meetings, posters and information in lobbies and the tenant handbook to promote maintenance and increase understanding of repair standards.

## Clean Buildings Strategy

Tenants deserve and expect clean places to live. The Clean Buildings Strategy identifies how we will improve the quality and standard of cleanliness of buildings. We will be establishing a building cleanliness steering group, which will include tenants, to oversee the implementation and monitoring of these activities.

The key to improving building cleanliness is standardized routines and improved performance measurement. This will enable us to set clear, measurable targets and evaluate our success in achieving them. We will begin by reviewing cleaning routines and implementing standardized practices in all buildings. Increasing staff accountability for building cleanliness and measuring cleanliness as a key performance indicator will help set clear expectations. We will conduct inspections more often and collect and monitor data on tenant satisfaction with building cleanliness to help guide our decisions.

In addition to these new standardized routines, we will:

- ▶ Enhance the frequency of weekend and evening cleaning through a tenant apprenticeship program
- ▶ Explore the use of technology to support scheduling and recording of duties to support staff in these tasks
- ▶ Ensure contract-managed buildings provide the same service as direct-managed buildings
- ▶ Expand research and implementation of standardized, environmentally friendly cleaning products and building materials

We will also improve communications to tenants on cleaning services through a range of media, such as building meetings, posters and newsletters. Finally, as part of our customer service strategy, we will take steps to improve our response to, and resolution of, tenant cleanliness complaints.

## Integrated Pest Management Strategy

We launched an Integrated Pest Management strategy in 2007 to address pest infestations. This strategy places particular emphasis on bedbug management. We will invest an additional \$800,000 in funding for building pest management support in 2010 alone.

Our integrated approach combines a variety of techniques and products that pose the least risk to human health and the environment.

We will strengthen and coordinate our efforts to get rid of pests by:

- ▶ Improving building management practices to establish clear roles and accountabilities for pest management
- ▶ Using prequalified pest control contractors and tested treatment systems
- ▶ Increasing support for tenants and staff through education programs and by fostering partnerships with community and governmental agencies

We recognize the need for services that support tenants who become vulnerable and for seniors in managing pests in their units. We will work to identify partners that can help us provide supports and services to these tenants in ridding their units of pests.



Staff work hard to keep our buildings clean and well-maintained.



## Outcome:

### VALUABLE COMMUNITY SPACES

As a landlord, we recognize that our real estate, including the spaces that exist in and around our buildings, provides value to the people of Toronto. We know, too, that within our densely populated and growing city, there is always demand for safe, clean and appealing spaces.

Going forward in 2010, we will work to provide tenants and neighbouring communities with access to more spaces by enhancing and better managing the spaces in our portfolio. Increasing access to these spaces will bring enjoyment and pride to residents, enable active participation and relationship-building within the community, and provide social or economic opportunities to surrounding residents.

### Community Gardens Strategy

Toronto Community Housing supports the continued growth and development of community gardening across the city. Community gardens improve the appearance and utility of common spaces and offer opportunities for learning, physical activity and community engagement. Gardens encourage increased and equitable access to urban food production and help promote green education within buildings. They foster

food-friendly communities and empower tenants with food skills and information.

In 2010, we will align our management of community gardens and revitalization efforts with the food strategy developed by the City of Toronto. We will use community gardening as a community building tool—for example, by including programming around roof planters on new buildings to develop healthy communities with common interests.

We currently support about 100 shared common space gardens across the city. These gardens were first launched as part of our 2007 Green Plan. They are supported at the community level mainly by tenants, staff and partner agencies.

To advance the use of community gardens, we have asked three community partners—FoodShare Toronto, Afri-Can FoodBasket and The Stop Community Food Centre—to help develop a comprehensive approach to community gardening in 2010. The strategy will recommend how to ensure the independent sustainability of community gardens and their positive impact on communities. Other elements of the strategy include:

- ▶ Compiling a list of existing community gardens and potential community gardening sites
- ▶ Determining the feasibility of expanding the number of existing community gardens

- ▶ Developing approaches for expanding tenant education and engagement
- ▶ Discovering new community gardening opportunities for urban and suburban settings

### Curb Appeal Strategy

Many neighbourhoods where social housing was built in Toronto are characterized by social and physical isolation. Over the years, ongoing lack of funding has led to a decline in upkeep and visual appeal of certain buildings and communities.

Since Toronto Community Housing was formed in 2002, we have worked to upgrade buildings and enhance the appearance of neighbourhoods. Our goal is to foster community pride, make tenants feel safer in their neighbourhoods, improve community health for tenants, and encourage better neighbourhood identity.

We provide funding each year to enhance the aesthetic appeal of up to 10 communities. The communities are chosen through a process that involves and engages tenants.

These projects are transforming neighbourhoods by introducing well-lit places for people to gather, children's play areas, flowerbeds and design elements that better connect buildings to the larger community. They also provide training and economic development opportunities for tenants of the participating community.

## Use of Space Strategy

We regularly receive requests from tenants, community organizations, service agencies and partners to use existing spaces in our buildings. We recognize that promoting the effective use of space in our buildings by tenants, community organizations and partner agencies can help advance our efforts towards helping to create healthy communities.

Within our portfolio, there are numerous common rooms, individual rental units and outdoor spaces. We have many relationships with agencies across the city that refer clients, rent units or office space, or provide services to tenants within our buildings. We are developing new guidelines and processes to improve the way we manage these spaces and these relationships.

We will begin a process in 2010 to identify available spaces that could be dedicated for use by community organizations and partner agencies. We will also launch clear guidelines for staff and agencies on developing effective referral and common space agreements. To support this effort, we will equip teams with formal agreements and consistent processes to govern relationships with service agencies based on an exchange of value of services for value of spaces.



### ACCESSIBILITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Every year, Toronto Community Housing works to increase our inventory of accessible buildings, by making upgrades to public spaces (ramps, doors, laundry rooms) and individual units. We dedicate resources to buildings where accessibility improvements are feasible and where they will provide the greatest benefit to residents.

We are proud to have made customer service more accessible by achieving accessibility standards in all our operating unit offices, and through our new Community Design Accessibility Centre, we are streamlining the process of modifying units in order to meet individual needs. Our work is guided by an accessibility plan and informed through consultations with the Anti-Ableism Committee and the Accessibility Implementation Advisory Committee, two groups of active tenant leaders from Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods.

## Outcome:

### ENHANCED COMMUNITY SAFETY

We are committed to improving safety conditions and to making tenants feel safer in their buildings and neighbourhoods as part of our support for healthy communities. While our most recent tenant survey showed significant improvements in measures of community safety and community pride, there is always room to improve.

We aim to ensure that communities will be made safer by those who live and work there—and that these efforts will continue to be supported by the police. Achieving this vision will contribute, over time, to reductions in violence and crime, increased pride in the community and less anti-social behaviour.

Our approach relies on good relationships between our community safety teams and Operating Unit staff, and on a strong understanding of community needs. We also believe in empowering tenants to encourage them to take on greater responsibility for safeguarding their communities. We want to build capacity in the community so that tenants can advocate for themselves and draw on the resources of the police and social agencies to address negative influences and strengthen their voice in the community.

## Community Safety Strategy

Over the next three years, we will continue to promote community-based, preventative strategies for creating safer neighbourhoods. We will strengthen our approach to community safety through the development of an updated Community Safety Strategy delivered during 2010 and implemented in 2011 and 2012. The strategy will build and expand on a combination of the following approaches:

- ▶ Working with tenants and community groups to take steps to prevent and resolve anti-social behaviours
- ▶ Engaging tenants and the community through education, youth-oriented programs, community social and economic development, and partnerships
- ▶ Adequately maintaining properties and improving the upkeep, lighting, surveillance, and enhancement of buildings and grounds

Some examples of how these approaches are already being enacted “on the ground” are as follows.

### Prevent and resolve anti-social behaviours

Anti-social behaviours have a negative impact on community safety and the livability of communities. We have worked with tenants and communities to identify anti-social behaviours and develop protocols on acceptable standards. These

protocols will form the consistent Community Standards for living in Toronto Community Housing. We will pilot the Community Standards in several communities in 2010, with a view to implementing them more broadly in 2011 and 2012.

### Partnerships and community development

We are committed to strengthening our partnerships with Toronto Police Services and other agencies, such as academic institutions and community safety organizations. This approach will enable us to share ideas, provide support, solve problems and determine best practices in service delivery for communities.

To help community members to take ownership of outdoor spaces associated with crime or anti-social activities, we will continue to sponsor a series of summertime events, such as the *Reclaiming Outdoor Space* initiative. Our aim is to help enhance community pride and build safer, stronger neighbourhoods.

In conjunction with our strategies to create economic opportunities for tenants, we will introduce a Cadet Program to attract youth from our communities who may be interested in community safety. The Cadet Program will be facilitated in partnership with community colleges and Toronto Police Services.



Community Safety Officers work with tenants to promote safe communities.

### Enhanced property management

Well-planned and cared-for buildings and properties, and improvements such as better access control and lighting, complement our health promotion activities to add to the safety of our communities. The community safety strategy is therefore inherently linked to a number of our other strategies in this plan, such as Clean Buildings and Capital Repairs, as they indirectly contribute to enhanced community safety through improved property management.

In addition, we will focus on physical improvements such as installation of access controls to lobbies and entrances, installation of video cameras, and landscaping and lighting to ensure that areas people use are seen by their neighbours.

## Outcome:

### SOUND INVESTMENTS IN REAL ESTATE ASSETS

To guide our investments in real estate assets over the next 10 years, we created our \$1.5-billion *Housing Works* strategy. *Housing Works* investments will transform our portfolio into a valuable asset for tenants and the people of Toronto that provides a healthy, accessible and safe living environment for current and future tenants.

*Housing Works* establishes benchmarks that guide investment decisions for the repair, retrofit, revitalization and replacement of our housing stock. It is based on a comprehensive review of the condition of our real estate, as well as the operating performance of our properties.

The **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** reflects the second to fourth years of the *Housing Works* 10-year plan for our buildings and facilities.

### Capital Repair Strategy

To ensure that all rental housing units provide tenants with a healthy and safe living environment, we need to know what it costs to achieve a good state of repair and what it will cost each year to maintain this condition. Some buildings are not in acceptable condition now, while others are in very good condition.

Toronto Community Housing uses a recognized real-estate industry standard to rate the state of repair of our buildings, known as the Facilities Condition Index (FCI). We have selected an FCI benchmark range of 10 to 20 per cent, with the goal of having an average rating of 12 per cent across our entire portfolio. Achieving this level means homes, on average, will be in a fair condition, with all major deficiencies addressed.

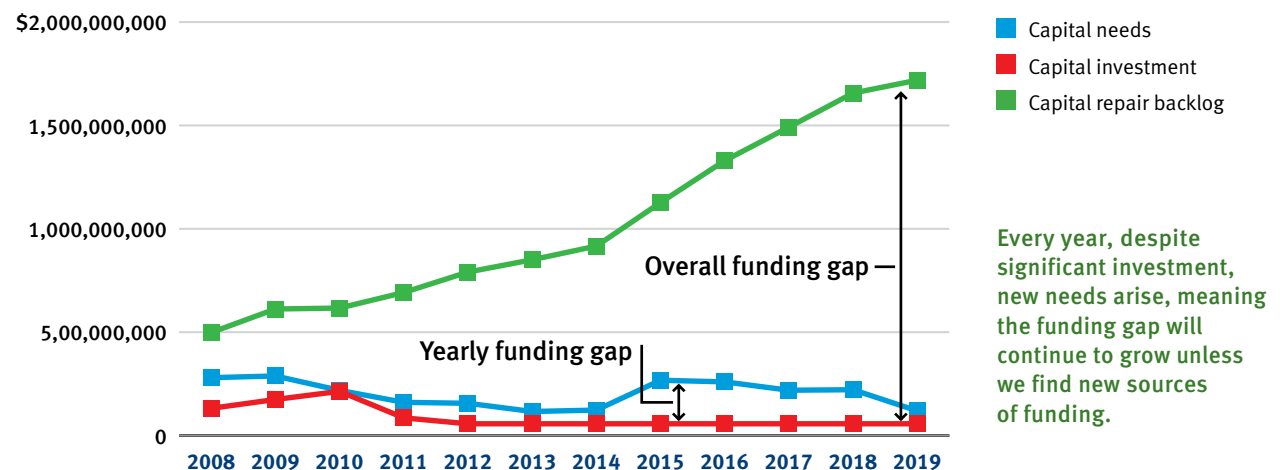
With recent one-time investments, we are close to achieving the target average of 12 per cent for our portfolio. However, the capital needs of our buildings continue to grow. Without significant annual investments, some buildings will soon be in an unacceptable condition.

Maintaining buildings that have already met the target and bringing others up to the

target will require an annual investment of \$100 million per year, which is more than we can fund internally. To address the gap this additional requirement will create, we are:

- ▶ Making investments in environmental retrofits that reduce operating costs
- ▶ Asking the City of Toronto to apply the tax exemption for municipal infrastructure to Toronto Community Housing buildings and reinvest the savings in capital repairs
- ▶ Implementing strategies that will maximize revenues from non-rental sources and further reduce operating costs
- ▶ Working with senior levels of government to find ways to ensure that the provincial and federal governments provide regular, ongoing capital investments to help us maintain buildings at a fair standard

### Capital Investment and the Growing Backlog



## REGENT PARK

Toronto Community Housing is working together with our development partner, The Daniels Corporation, to lead the revitalization of Regent Park into a mixed-income, mixed-use community. It is well underway with new quality homes for returning tenants and new owners, many new job opportunities for tenants and new and improved community spaces and facilities for everyone. Phase one tenants started moving into the first new rental building in May 2009 and new buildings were ready for more phase one tenants throughout 2009 and 2010. Also in 2010, the first phase two households started moving. Construction in phase two begins in 2010 and in addition to new, quality rental housing and market condominiums, phase two includes many amenities for residents – a new central park, indoor aquatic centre, community centre and an arts and cultural centre.



## Community Revitalization Strategy

We continue to pursue a comprehensive approach to revitalization in some of our oldest and largest communities. We are reintegrating social housing with surrounding neighborhoods to establish mixed income communities and provide opportunities for affordable home ownership.

We involve and engage tenant advisory committees, community and neighbourhood organizations, and the City of Toronto in this process.

The revitalization strategy includes five key components:

- ▶ Following a financially viable plan that leverages the value of land, increased density in units, additional financial opportunities, and new partnerships to offset the cost of new construction

- ▶ Engaging the community throughout the revitalization process
- ▶ Creating sustainable communities by pursuing high-performance green buildings and innovation to reduce energy and water costs
- ▶ Integrating excellence in planning, urban design and architecture
- ▶ Providing economic opportunities for tenants throughout the process

Our Regent Park revitalization is beginning to show the benefits of this approach. Revitalization is transforming the community, creating better places to live and attracting new amenities.



### AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO

By partnering with the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing has the opportunity to help deliver on the city's affordable housing goals. We work together to make affordable housing available to low- and moderate-income households in new communities such as the West Don Lands and the Railway Lands, while also helping to create mixed-income neighbourhoods. Our development experience enables us to partner with the City when there are opportunities to add new affordable rental housing to existing communities, such as the renovation of 717 Broadview from a nursing home into an apartment for seniors.

## Environmental Retrofit Strategy

Toronto Community Housing is committed to demonstrating leadership in energy conservation and environmental protection. Our environmental action plan, called the *Green Plan*, sets out targets aimed at reducing our ecological footprint as well as reducing costs. We're making good progress in meeting our targets to reduce pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and waste, which is helping to lower utility charges and building management costs.

We are investing in systems and equipment to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs. We are bringing aging buildings up to a more energy-efficient and sustainable level, and we are putting green, energy-efficient and smart technologies into new buildings by investing in building automation systems, modern boilers, energy-efficient lighting and better doors and windows.

We work with tenants and community partners to make our communities greener through creative partnerships that further our green goals. Because tenants have an influence on half the energy consumed in multi-residential properties and can also help reduce water consumption by their actions, we will engage tenants through multiple channels about how they can help make our communities green.

In 2009 we deployed more than 50 community “animators” – tenants who educate fellow tenants about how to reduce waste. By the end of the year, this program had helped to reduce waste volumes by one-third to one-half in several of the participating communities. We will continue to expand this innovative approach that achieves both tenant engagement and operational objectives.

### Housing Replacement Strategy

The average age of Toronto Community Housing’s buildings, including houses, is 45 years old. A number of our buildings are showing their age and some no longer meet the needs of tenants. In select cases, no reasonable level of investment can bring the properties up to our standards.

We are implementing a strategy for replacing these aging units through new construction or the acquisition of existing rental buildings to maintain the current levels of rent-geared-to-income housing. All replacement would occur either after the building is vacant or with a long notice period and relocation support for current tenants.



#### GREENING OUR COMMUNITIES

Toronto Community Housing focuses on improving the performance of high-rise apartment buildings to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Our Building Energy Retrofit Program involves 19 buildings totalling 5.3 million square feet. The project includes high-efficiency lighting, weatherization, cooling and heating systems, heat recovery ventilation units, solar panels, and wind turbines. Construction is underway and once complete it will reduce electricity use by 8%, water use by 7.5%, and natural gas use by 20%. We have identified a range of other opportunities to upgrade and retrofit our buildings and introduce renewable energy technologies while lowering operating costs and providing jobs for tenants.

# Strengthening Our Foundation

A Tenant Services Coordinator checks a tenant's file.

## **Outcome: Improved Customer Service**

Customer Service Strategy  
Customer Supports and Systems Strategy

## **Outcome: Healthy Workplaces**

Succession Management Strategy  
Diversity and Inclusion Strategy  
Health and Wellness Strategy

## **Outcome: Financial Discipline**

Long-Term Financial Health Strategy  
Business Operations Strategy

## **Outcome: Managed Risk and Effective Governance**

Enterprise Risk Management Strategy  
Corporate Governance Strategy

## **Outcome: Better Communications**

Tenant Communications Strategy  
Employee Communications Strategy  
External Relations Strategy





**O**rganizational improvement is a priority in 2010. We will focus our efforts on strengthening our ability to deliver our core business by ensuring there is a strong foundation in place for the execution of solid business practice.

We will invest in strengthening our organization by:

- ▶ Developing a strong landlord and service structure
- ▶ Improving communications, particularly with tenants
- ▶ Renewing our emphasis on customer-focused service
- ▶ Strengthening our internal audit and risk management functions
- ▶ Maintaining financial stability for our assets
- ▶ Pursuing strategies to improve our financial performance

Recent surveys and measures have revealed important facts about our performance in key areas.

- ▶ Tenant satisfaction with the quality of service they receive from Operating Units and from the 24/7 Contact Centre is increasing, but there is still room to improve

- ▶ Satisfaction with the quality of information received follows a similar trend
- ▶ Meanwhile, rental arrears are increasing, which requires additional vigilance and support for tenants by all staff

Vacancies are part of the cycle of rental housing. We must continuously improve the speed with which we turn around a vacant unit to a new family in need.

## Outcome:

### IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

As a landlord, we need to deliver consistently good customer service. Over the past year we made several changes to better serve the needs of tenants, including shifting more staff to front-line positions such as Customer Service Facilitators and Superintendents.

We want our tenants to receive consistently good services. This means tenants:

- ▶ Have a choice of ways to access services, such as the telephone, Internet and face-to-face
- ▶ Find enthusiastic, helpful and committed staff whenever they contact us
- ▶ Say that they don't get passed from pillar-to-post – a “one and done” approach



A Customer Service Facilitator responds to a tenant's inquiry.

- ▶ Feel they are respected, valued and that their views are taken into account
- ▶ Know that staff are accountable and take ownership of tenant requests
- ▶ Have confidence that we understand our tenants' needs and will deliver what we promise
- ▶ Recognize that we are driven by our commitments to the customer

While we believe we are on track to meet our goal of improving our ability to deliver consistently good service, we remain committed to improving the tenant experience.

## Customer Service Strategy

We will focus on renewing our ability to resolve tenant concerns the first time they contact us. We'll do this by reorganizing resources and by engaging our employees around exceptional customer service.

### Six key principles

Our strategy to improve customer service builds on six key principles of service excellence: accessible, consistent, timely, respectful, relevant and quality. To achieve consistently good service, we will put our customers, teams and people at the heart of everything we do. We will engage in a constant and ongoing dialogue with tenants—always seeking out new and innovative ways to engage with them so that we can best understand and respond to their needs.

We need to ensure that every contact tenants have with us is a positive experience that addresses their needs. Delivering excellent customer service, first time, every time, is at the core of our business. This means enabling well-trained and motivated employees throughout the organization to take ownership of customer concerns and act proactively, anticipating customers' needs across a range of services.

## Customer commitment

As part of our strategy we will collaborate across our three companies (Toronto Community Housing, hsi solutions and Housing Connections) and with tenants to create a map of the exceptional customer experience. Our ultimate goal is culture change; a shift towards a customer-centric culture supported by an integrated service delivery model. The model must be embraced and gauged by consistent standards, metrics with integrity, clear accountability, diligent record-keeping and continuous improvement regarding responsiveness and resolution.

Together with tenants, stakeholders and staff, we will develop a customer service charter that outlines the standard of service expected from Toronto Community Housing and avenues of appeal for dissatisfaction with that service. It will be a three-way understanding that outlines the responsibilities of Toronto Community Housing, our customers and our partners. The charter will define our service commitment and how the delivery of that commitment will be judged and measured.

## Accessible customer service

We committed to providing accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities in our Accessibility Plan in 2007. The customer service standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* have identified additional service needs that we will be putting in place. These include reviewing and establishing policies, practices and procedures on providing services to tenants with disabilities, and training staff, contractors and others who interact with tenants on the customer service standards.



Superintendents and maintenance workers serve the needs of tenants and buildings.

## Customer Supports and Systems Strategy

We will need a range of delivery channels to best meet our tenants' needs. The service mix will change over time, with increased acceptance of electronic services, and we need to anticipate future changes.

The key delivery channels are:

- ▶ Face-to-face
- ▶ Telephone service
- ▶ Self-service (the customer accessing services by themselves)
- ▶ Through other organizations

Our aim is to deliver seamless and consistent customer service through face-to-face, telephone and Internet contact. We will make the best use of staff and information technology to ensure that the majority of enquiries are resolved at the first point of contact. We will explore alternative ways to deliver service through the use of technology to benefit those tenants who prefer computers as a mode of communication.

Over the next three years we will update and improve our main information technology system that we use to keep tenant information. This system will ultimately

become the only system used to track tenant information. As we move to one system, we will start tracking additional information about tenant requests and needs, so we can provide more customized or individualized service. Identifying the additional information to track will be the first step in understanding the different needs of tenants, so that we can align service delivery with the specific needs of tenant groups.

## Outcome:

### HEALTHY WORKPLACES

We recognize that our employees are our greatest asset. We are proud of our commitment to making the company a great place to work, and believe everyone in the organization has a role in doing so. To us, a healthy workplace means:

- ▶ Engaged and productive employees
- ▶ A diverse and inclusive workforce
- ▶ A safe and healthy working environment
- ▶ Equitable leaders who are open to differences and value the opinions and contributions of all team members
- ▶ Good internal and external customer service

Human rights and equity, social inclusion, and anti-racism are important values to us, as well as lenses through which we view our work. In addition to ongoing programs, we will focus on wellness, diversity and succession planning in our efforts to create and sustain a healthy workplace.

## Succession Management Strategy

Over the next 10 years, a significant number of our senior staff will become eligible to retire. To respond to the challenge, we are embarking on a succession planning strategy that targets senior leader replacement and defines new leadership competencies. These competencies will shape the performance indicators that we will use to recruit, identify, evaluate and groom high-potential candidates.

We will also develop competency frameworks that match the unique characteristics of different levels and positions. We will measure progress through a rigorous performance management plan. And we will use training in equitable leadership skills to support the development of a highly qualified, diverse group of leaders across the organization.

## Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Managing our workforce fairly and equitably, and understanding that diversity creates an inclusive workforce, is simply good business. Retaining and helping employees to develop new skills, eliminating systemic barriers to fair employment, and matching our workforce to the communities we serve helps us to provide good customer service. We are committed to a diverse workforce that reflects the values of dignity, respect, fairness and inclusion. Diversity should characterize the way we work and how we provide services to our customers.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supports our efforts to create a positive work environment in which all employees have the opportunity to perform to their full potential. Leaders and managers will be expected to incorporate diversity strategies and programs into their operations and functions.

To demonstrate leadership in this area, we will continue to promote and include diversity and equity in every aspect of our business, including:

- ▶ Practicing diversity when making decisions about recruitment, employee development and selection
- ▶ Providing training, including equitable leadership training for managers on managing a diverse workforce and cultural competency workshops for staff

- ▶ Communicating to increase awareness about diversity initiatives
- ▶ Accommodating the value of faith in the workplace
- ▶ Measuring the impact of the diversity strategy, including a workforce census survey

## Health and Wellness Strategy

Work-life balance goes beyond personal well-being to affect business outcomes. Organizations report less absenteeism and fewer workplace injuries when employees are healthy.

We recognize the benefit of a healthy workforce and actively promote the personal

well-being of all our employees. We measure employees' perceptions and opinions through regular surveys and performance reports. In 2010, we will maintain several activities to promote health and wellness in our workplaces, such as:

- ▶ Working with our union partners on Joint Health and Safety Committees
- ▶ A renewed focus on our Healthy Workplace Committees
- ▶ Wellness programs, including fitness and nutrition incentives
- ▶ Staff training on healthy living and disease/pandemic prevention

Toronto Community Housing is proud to have received several awards of recognition for being a great place to work.



## Outcome:

### FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE

Toronto Community Housing is committed to running an efficient and effective business. This includes collecting rents, low vacancy rates, manageable costs in line with the non-profit sector and operating within our budget.

In the current economic environment, financial pressures are a reality for most businesses. Toronto Community Housing faces a number of financial challenges, including aging buildings, increased utility costs and waste charges and decreasing revenues from rent-g geared-to-income units.

During 2010-2012, we will work to find ways of increasing revenue and reducing operating costs to maintain our social housing investment. We will work to improve our vacancy rate, internal controls and risk management. And we will continue to urge all three levels of government to make much-needed investments in Toronto's social housing portfolio.

At the same time, we will manage the corporation's finances prudently and pursue strategies to improve financial performance. These efforts will complement our debt management plan, which we will use to leverage revenues and savings to raise funds to invest in capital repairs through financing.

## Long-Term Financial Health Strategy

Long-term financial sustainability is critical to the ongoing operations of Toronto Community Housing and equally important to community revitalization initiatives currently underway and planned for the future. Financial discipline will ensure we maintain our credit ratings and continued access to the debt capital market.

The long-term financial strategy includes:

- ▶ Increasing revenue streams from sources other than rent, such as commercial revenue, rooftop leasing revenue and cable income
- ▶ Pursuing new commercial asset and income streams through revitalization projects and the sale of market housing
- ▶ Enhancing revenue generation and return on current business investments
- ▶ Seeking out and investing in profitable businesses related to housing
- ▶ Maximizing investment income by developing proactive forecasting mechanisms
- ▶ Instilling financial discipline by identifying the financial risks associated with business opportunities and streamlining our processes to mitigate those risks
- ▶ Broadening our borrowing ability by using conventional methods to fund revitalization initiatives

## Business Operations Strategy

A good measure of company performance is net operating income, which is operating income less operating expenses before taxes and interest are deducted. Maintaining and enhancing our annual net operating income is critical to ensuring favourable credit ratings, debt-coverage ratios and investment in our assets. Improved net operating income will result from increased revenues and lower manageable costs.

We will seek to improve the rental revenue stream by prudently evaluating tenant rental levels and calculations on a consistent basis. We will also improve revenue through increased vacancy management control by improving turnaround time (i.e. the time a unit is empty between tenants moving out and new tenants moving in).

To reduce operating costs, we will invest in solutions that reduce maintenance, waste management and energy costs. We will also implement effective internal financial controls and rigorous internal processes to mitigate financial risks and safeguard our assets. Reducing costs will free up more cash on an annual basis to reinvest in improving buildings, and it will have the added benefit of encouraging more sustainable, green practices.

## Outcome:

### MANAGED RISK AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

In 2010-2012, we will adopt a robust approach to help us identify and mitigate risks in areas such as eviction prevention, internal financial controls, waiting lists, procurement and customer service.

The Board and the Executive Team are vested with the responsibility of achieving the outcomes and strategies outlined in the **Community Management Plan 2010-2012**. A robust corporate governance framework is required to ensure Board and senior management responsibility and accountability.

#### Enterprise Risk Management Strategy

Enterprise risk management is a continuous process applied across the company to identify events that may impact Toronto Community Housing and to manage multiple risks to an acceptable risk-tolerance level.

Enterprise risk management requires a wholesale shift in our thinking and culture. Our goal is to integrate risk management assessments into the fabric of our everyday business at all levels of the organization. We will start this process in 2010 and continue to implement risk management systems across the organization over the next two years.

The process will be continuous and evolving. It will need to factor in a constantly changing operating environment to capture both current and anticipated risks. The key is to manage risk within Toronto Community Housing's risk tolerance while taking into account the cost/benefit of the risk management.

Toronto Community Housing holds paramount the health and safety of our tenants, employees and the public. To support our goals in this area in 2010-2012, we will educate and train staff on the company's code of conduct. We will establish an ethics hotline for staff and tenants, where they can report or seek guidance on unsafe, unethical or improper conduct, and we will strengthen our internal capacity to promptly review and investigate unethical or improper conduct. An internal audit function will monitor that policies and controls are effective, and a program of selected annual audits will review those policies and programs with the greatest financial risk exposure.

#### Corporate Governance Strategy

Responsibility for implementing the **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** is vested with our Board of Directors who set out the policies and direction to the Chief Executive Officer and senior leadership team. Together, they are accountable to staff, tenants, communities, stakeholders and the public for achieving the plan's outcomes.

In 2009, the Board started a comprehensive review to lay the foundation for a robust corporate governance framework to guide implementation of the plan. These efforts will continue in 2010, with a focus on aligning corporate governance with the plan's strategic priorities. Activities will include:

- ▶ Implementing an oversight system to monitor performance and achievements
- ▶ Reorganizing the structures and processes of the board committees and senior management advisory committees
- ▶ Realigning the corporation's operating, development, revenue generation and subsidiary structures
- ▶ Incorporating best practices in governance

## Outcome:

### BETTER COMMUNICATIONS

Effective, timely and strategic communications can increase the effectiveness of Toronto Community Housing's programs and activities. Better communications can help build trust and respect among tenants, staff and stakeholders, foster more inclusive and engaged communities and strengthen relationships with key publics.

By developing and implementing coordinated communications strategies we will strengthen our capacity to tell the Toronto Community Housing story – namely, how every day our work helps to open doors for people living in social housing and improve the lives of people living in our city.

In 2010 and beyond, we will strengthen our public affairs function to improve how we communicate with tenants, staff and stakeholders, and how we build relationships with community organizations, service agencies and government partners.

## Tenant Communications Strategy

In past years, we have improved how we keep tenants informed and provide them with opportunities for engagement and participation in decision-making. But our most recent tenant survey (2008) indicates that many tenants are unaware of these opportunities and how they benefit their communities.

During the Community Management Plan consultations in October 2009, both tenants and staff placed a high priority on improving tenant communications. In particular, they identified the need for more timely and consistent communications between tenants and the organization that better address cultural, language and accessibility barriers.

Through the Tenant Communications Strategy, we will work with tenants to identify these gaps, needs and improvement opportunities. This will include:

- ▶ Building and maintaining channels for two-way communications with tenants, consistent with existing strategies for tenant engagement and social inclusion
- ▶ Maximizing opportunities to engage tenants in telling their stories
- ▶ Improving communications in plain language and in multiple languages
- ▶ Making communications a mandatory part of the planning and delivery of all tenant and community programs and activities

The strategy will guide us in developing and implementing new communications vehicles to communicate with and engage all tenants in a way that reflects tenant diversity and is welcoming, inclusive and accessible. Our goal is timely, relevant, consistent and effective communications across the entire portfolio, including contract-managed buildings.

## Employee Communications Strategy

We will develop and launch a strategy to strengthen our processes and capacity for communicating with employees. The strategy will boost staff engagement and morale, and increase awareness and understanding of our vision, mission and role.

Toronto Community Housing must ensure employees receive timely and accurate information. Engaged employees are essential to the success of all our activities. The strategy will involve new and existing ways to communicate with and engage all employees, including:

- ▶ Working with managers to improve communications with employees and tenants
- ▶ Developing a communications training program for managers
- ▶ Launching a new intranet site and promoting two-way dialogue via the new site

## External Relations Strategy

This comprehensive strategy will guide how we inform and engage key audiences about our vision, organizational priorities and directions.

Through the strategy, we will develop products and approaches for:

- ▶ Communicating with the Board and key government partners
- ▶ Showcasing best practices and success stories
- ▶ Profiling Toronto Community Housing's leadership in communicating the role and value of social housing
- ▶ Communicating our progress on key strategies, such as *Eviction Prevention*, *Mental Health*, and *Housing Works*

We will also develop and implement new tools and approaches for communicating with tenants, employees and stakeholders, including:

- ▶ Making greater use of digital communications and social media
- ▶ Using closed circuit TV in buildings
- ▶ Providing regular timely communications bulletins

Furthermore, in 2010 the strategy will guide our communications to support our organizational response to the LeSage Review. Communicating effectively with all stakeholders will demonstrate our commitment to taking the review seriously and to preventing evictions and doing the right thing when tenants are vulnerable.



CEO Keiko Nakamura and Premier Dalton McGuinty discuss the plans for the revitalization of Regent Park.



# Moving Forward

The **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** sets out the values and strategic directions that will guide our future activities. We have plotted a course toward a vision for the organization that will enable us to deliver our mandate. In implementing this strategic plan, we will strive to balance priorities with resources. While the plan sets out a three-year vision, Toronto Community Housing will re-evaluate its priorities annually and adjust them as required to ensure that we continue to anticipate, listen and respond to the needs of all our stakeholders.

Moving forward, carrying out the strategies in this plan will require us to align resources to strategies, establish measurable outcomes and set targets and deliverables for each priority area. We will develop performance measures for monitoring progress and evaluation, and create a culture of accountability and active performance management. We are committed to reinforcing the essential linkages between the outcomes we seek, the strategies we pursue, and the performance we achieve—to the benefit of tenants, the organization and stakeholders. We will manage risks to ensure that necessary resources, processes and governance are in place to make each piece of the plan successful.

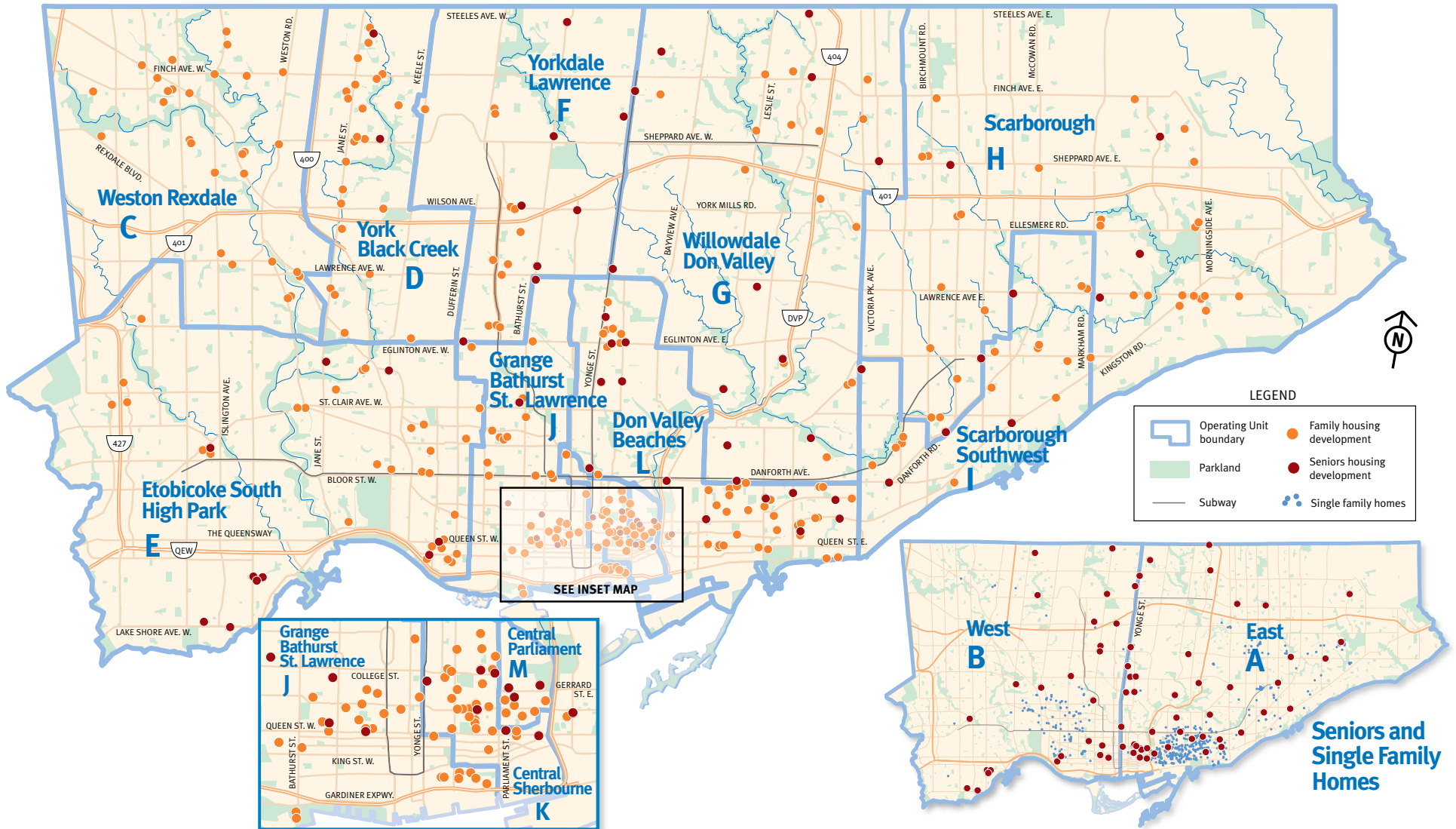
As Toronto Community Housing executes its strategic plan, performance reports will be synchronized to enable us to monitor our progress. Our balanced scorecard will report on results achieved, including key measures that will reflect critical processes for managing vacancies, managing arrears, preventing evictions and responding to tenants' calls and requests for service.

While the **Community Management Plan 2010-2012** provides a framework for the next three years, it is also designed to be a fluid document that will evolve through ongoing feedback and consultations. The process will continually engage all constituencies that will be affected by the plan or that have a role in its implementation.

By working in partnership with all our stakeholders toward our common goal of providing quality, affordable housing, we hope to meet and exceed the standards that we set for ourselves and create an organization that makes a significant contribution to building healthy, sustainable communities.



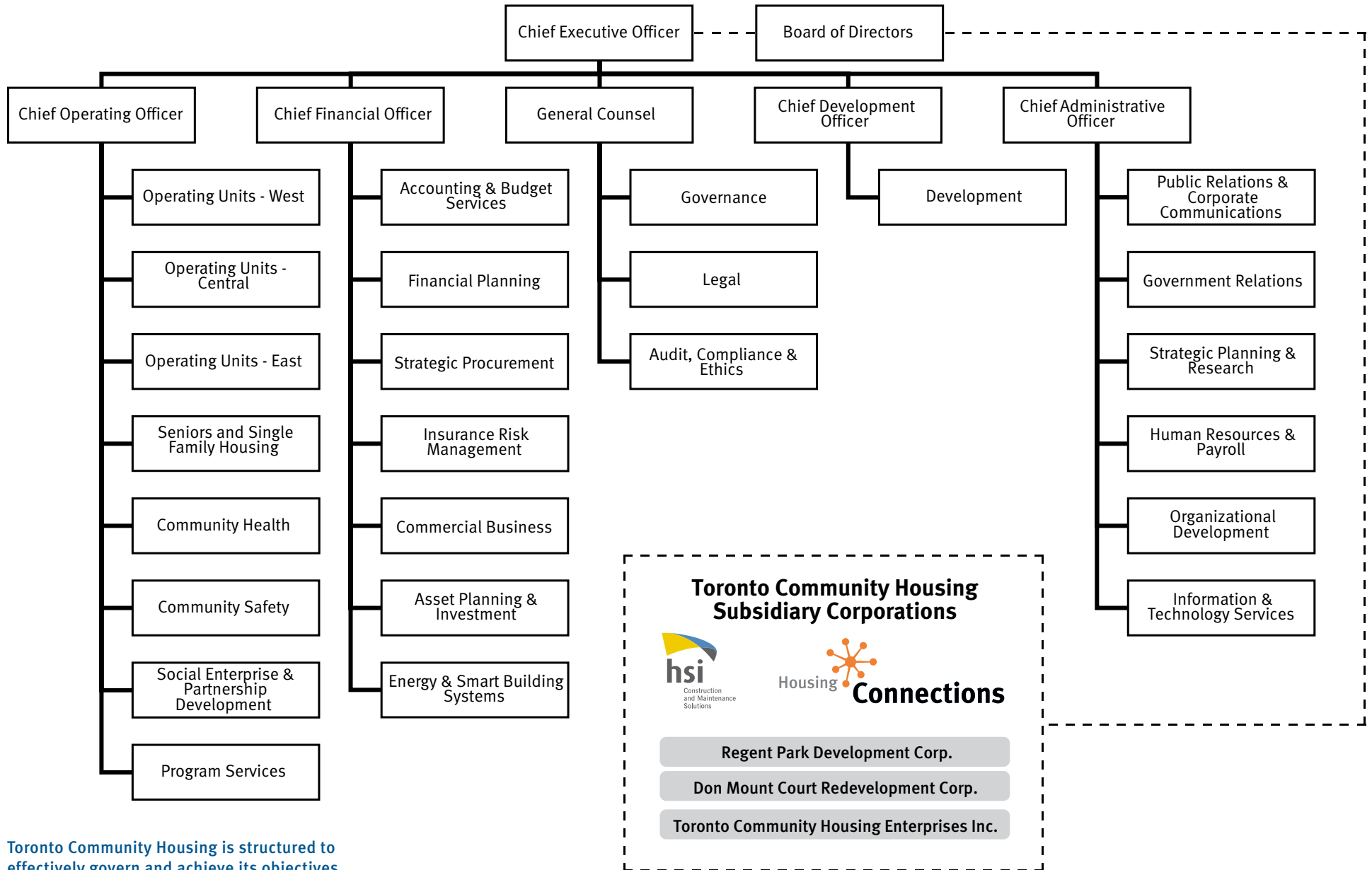
# Our Communities



Our housing is managed through thirteen Operating Units across Toronto, including two Operating Units dedicated to seniors and tenants in single family homes.

# Toronto Community Housing

## Organizational Chart



Toronto Community Housing is structured to effectively govern and achieve its objectives.

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Toronto Community Housing



An executive summary of this document is available in English and in 18 additional languages. It is also available in Braille and large print formats. To get your copy, or to get another copy of this full version of the **Community Management Plan 2010-2012**, you can:

- ▶ Visit [www.torontohousing.ca/community\\_management\\_plan](http://www.torontohousing.ca/community_management_plan)
- ▶ Visit a Toronto Community Housing Operating Unit office
- ▶ Email [cmp@torontohousing.ca](mailto:cmp@torontohousing.ca) or call (416) 981-4248 to have a copy sent to your address

## Have something to say?

Email [cmp@torontohousing.ca](mailto:cmp@torontohousing.ca) or call (416) 981-4248 with your comments and questions about the Community Management Plan 2010-2012.

