

Closure of TCHC units at Firgrove Crescent: Dune Grassway and Blue Grassway–Marsh Grassway

Date: April 3, 2017

To: Executive Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Cluster A

Wards: Ward 7

SUMMARY

Toronto Community Housing Corporation's (TCHC) community at Firgrove Crescent includes three blocks of 2-storey and 4-storey townhomes with a total of 236 units built in 1971, a high-rise tower built in 1975, a community centre and a pool.

On December 8, 2016, the TCHC Board approved the closure of 2 of the 3 blocks of townhomes in the Firgrove community, totalling 134 units (see attached map - Dune Grassway, with 61 units, and Blue Grassway–Marsh Grassway, with 73 units). The structural integrity of the townhomes on the two blocks is seriously degraded and deteriorating rapidly. The Board authorised TCHC staff to begin the relocation process for the 108 affected households who currently live in these units.

The City's Shareholder Direction with TCHC requires that TCHC obtain Shareholder and Service Manager consent prior to making material changes in the number or distribution of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units.

This report seeks Council's approval for the closure of 134 units and the relocation of the households residing in these units in accordance with a City approved Tenant Relocation Assistance and Implementation Plan (TRAIP).

The TRAIP will ensure that affected households have the option to relocate to other units within the TCHC portfolio, are provided financial assistance and other supports, and will ensure that any households currently in receipt of RGI assistance will continue to receive that subsidy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager "Cluster A" recommends that:

1. City Council, in its capacity as Shareholder of Toronto Community Housing Corporation approve, pursuant to Section 7.4.1 (c) of the City's Shareholder Direction to Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the closure of 134 units at Firgrove Crescent as requested in the communication from Toronto Community Housing Corporation's President and Chief Executive Officer (Interim) dated March 31, 2017.
2. City Council, in its capacity as Service Manager under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to grant Service Manager consent pursuant to Section 7.4.1 (c) of the City's Shareholder Direction to Toronto Community Housing Corporation, to the closure of 134 units at Firgrove Crescent subject to Toronto Community Housing Corporation providing a Tenant Relocation and Assistance Implementation Plan, to the satisfaction of the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, that describes Toronto Community Housing Corporation's obligations regarding tenant relocation of affected Firgrove Crescent tenants.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No additional funding will be paid by the City to TCHC through the adoption of the recommendations in this report. TCHC will be responsible for any costs associated with financial assistance and support to affected households in accordance with the City-approved Tenant Relocation Assistance Implementation Plan (TRAIP).

The City will continue to provide the budgeted subsidy amount associated with two townhouse blocks proposed for closure Firgrove Crescent, estimated at \$237,644 annually. Until such time as decisions have been made on the future of the property, TCHC will require funding to meet its legislated obligations, including the continuation of RGI assistance for affected households, and to maintain safety and security of the property.

TCHC will need to consider future plans for the site and incorporate associated costs into their 10 year capital plan. An updated 10 year plan will be presented to Council for consideration as part of the Tenants First Implementation Plan in 2017.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council on July 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2016, adopted Tenants First - A Way Forward for Toronto Community Housing and Social Housing in Toronto. This report directed staff to create an Implementation Plan for the report.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX16.11>

City Council on November 13, 14, 15 and 18, 2013 approved a 10 year capital financing plan for TCHC. This plan relied on the financing of TCHC's capital repairs through equal participation of three levels of government.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX35.4>

COMMENTS

Tenants First

In keeping with the work of Tenants First - A Way Forward for Toronto Community Housing and Social Housing in Toronto, the safety and well-being of TCHC tenants is the primary concern in this matter. This report recommends closure of TCHC units due to safety concerns with respect to habitability, the deteriorated structural integrity of the buildings, and the risks of further deterioration.

A Phase One Implementation Report of the Tenant's First Report is planned for Executive Committee in the second quarter of 2017. These recommendations pertaining to Firgrove Crescent are before Committee and Council prior to that time because of the urgency of this matter (including the fact that tenants have identified the need to relocate prior to the school year commencing in September 2017).

Council approved a Ten-year capital plan for TCHC in 2013. TCHC will need to consider a future plan for properties at Firgrove. An updated Ten-year capital plan for TCHC will be presented to Council for consideration as part of the Tenants First Implementation Plan in 2017.

Background

TCHC's development at Firgrove Crescent includes three blocks of 2-storey and 4-storey townhomes and a high-rise tower. This report addresses closure of 2 of the 3 blocks of townhomes consisting of 2 two-bedrooms, 103 three-bedroom and 29 four-bedroom units. The combined 134 units currently house 108 households and 423 people.

TCHC has made past efforts to renovate and repair Firgrove Crescent. On July 9, 2015 TCHC's Board of Directors gave TCHC staff the direction to proceed with three pilot communities under the ReSet Capital Renewal and Community Transformation Strategy. Firgrove Crescent was one of the three identified sites. Through the ReSet process for these buildings, it was determined that because of the nature of the deterioration of the structures, the cost of fixing the buildings will likely exceed the cost of replacing them.

Shareholder Direction

The City of Toronto is the sole shareholder of TCHC. Section 7.4.1 (c) of the Shareholder Direction to TCHC requires that TCHC obtain Shareholder and Service Manager Consent prior to making material changes in the number or distribution of rent-geared-to-income units. The closure of a substantial number of RGI units concentrated in one geographical area constitute a material change due to the impact on residents and the community.

Tenant Relocation and Assistance Implementation Plans (TRAIP)

The City of Toronto, as Service Manager under the *Housing Services Act*, is responsible for the oversight of the social housing system including the approval of all TRAIPs. The TRAIP for Firgrove Crescent sets out the steps TCHC will take to support tenants to relocate units.

The TRAIP aims to ensure a minimal impact on tenants' lives resulting from closure of units at Dune Grassway and Blue Grassway–Marsh Grassway. It includes details on how the plan will be implemented and sets out what tenants can expect from Toronto Community Housing during the moving process, including: the level of financial assistance and other supports to assist with moving; a communication strategy that includes appropriate notice periods and updates on relocating; and information on an equitable and transparent unit relocation selection process.

TCHC has worked with the City to develop a process to engage with tenants in respect of both the closure of units and the relocation process. To date, TCHC has held two community meetings, on December 19th and February 2nd to announce the need to relocate and to answer questions. Approximately 75 residents attended each meeting. A document listing questions and answers about the relocation have been distributed to each affected household. An on-site relocation office has been set up where tenants can drop in or call to get questions answered.

CONTACT

Todd Orvitz, Director
Corporate Policy
Strategic & Corporate
Policy
416-392-6783
Todd.Orvitz@toronto.ca

Doug Rollins, Director
Housing Stability Services
Shelter, Support &
Housing Administration
416-392-0054
Doug.Rollins@toronto.ca

Jenn St. Louis, Policy
Development Officer
Social Development, Finance
& Administration
416-338-3677
Jenn.St.Louis@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Giuliana Carbone
Deputy City Manager, Cluster A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of Firgrove
2. TCHC Board Resolution from December 8, 2016
3. Letter from TCHC CEO (interim)