Opening Doors to Stable Housing:
An Effective Waiting List and Reduced Vacancy Rates Will Help More People Access Housing

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Presentation Overview

1. Background, Audit Objectives and Scope

2. Key Themes from the Audit - Video

3. Key Audit Findings and Recommendations

4. Recap and Conclusion
Background: Importance of Stable Housing

City’s Medical Officer of Health has reported:

“Housing that is affordable, good quality, and stable is key for promoting population health and reducing health inequities ...”

City’s Housing Opportunities Toronto Action Plan 2010-2020 reported:

“It is clear that investing in housing results in savings in the health, education, criminal justice and social service system...”
Background: Housing Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applicants Waiting</th>
<th>Housed RGI Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89,900 (2016)</td>
<td>2,750 (2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homelessness  Emergency Shelter  Supportive Housing  Subsidized Housing  Affordable Rental Housing  Affordable Home Ownership  Market Rental Housing  Market Home Ownership
Audit Objectives and Scope

1. Are applicants waiting for RGI assistance getting **timely and equitable access** – ensuring those with the **greatest need** are efficiently served?

2. Is the waiting list being **administered effectively** so that vacant subsidized **units are filled** as expeditiously as possible?

3. Is the City, as service manager, ensuring **compliance** with local rules and the legislation?
Key Themes

*The City needs to:*

1. Improve **data integrity** to know who is actively waiting
2. Review **prioritization of applicants** to consider those most in need
3. Make **better use** of available housing units so **more individuals and families** can access stable housing
4. Strengthen **controls** and increase **service integration**

Link to Video:

https://youtu.be/eGewl8pskbY
1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data... to Know Exactly Who is Actively Waiting
1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data ... to Help Providers Fill Vacancies Faster

- On average, it takes 6 offers to fill a vacancy
- 13% of offers are accepted
- $7 million vacancy loss
1. Improve Integrity of Waiting List Data – Key Actions

**Short Term (within 6 months)**

- Immediately fill vacant units with people in need of housing - *bachelor units for seniors*
- Communicate by email, text or phone to ensure a timely response to offers
- Report successes on a quarterly basis
- Consult with Province on legislative changes

**Medium Term (within a year)**

- Identify incorrect applicant information that should be investigated and resolved
- Deactivate applications with no contact for over 24 months
2. Review Prioritization of Applicants

- Properly prioritize applicant – ensure applicants that are a priority are given priority
- City should review its priority rules – the current rules have been in place since 2002
- Supporting the vulnerable to achieve stable housing – integrating homelessness and housing support services
- Consider how portable housing benefits can be used where vacancies in the physical social housing stock are limited
2. Review Prioritization of Applicants – Key Actions

**Short Term (within 6 months)**

- Emergency shelter clients should receive appropriate designation as a priority
- Prioritize applicants based on need

**Medium Term (within a year)**

- Refresh local priority rules
- Clarify what conditions require accommodation
- Review how portable housing benefits
- Improve integration of homelessness and housing supports
3. Make Better Use of Housing Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TCHC Data as at December 31, 2018</th>
<th># of units</th>
<th># of people impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rentable and vacant RGI units– including bachelors*</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional social housing units that are used for other purposes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used by contractors</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used for other purposes (e.g., staff, recreation, community programs)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to use social housing units for housing</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>1,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-housed</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional people that can be housed at TCHC</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,410</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Make Better Use of Housing Units

Possible opportunity to provide relief to the emergency shelter system

• 185 units in Regent Park and Lawrence Heights awaiting demolition

• Units we visited
  o have working kitchens, plumbing, electricity
  o need a thorough cleaning and some may need some minor repairs such as painting

• May potentially ease the City’s reliance on hotels and house families in an emergency housing situation
3. Make Better Use of Housing Units – Key Actions

**Short Term (within 6 months)**
- Review housing units used for storage
- Seek updates to legislation and local rules
- Determine feasibility of using tenant vacated TCHC units awaiting demolition as emergency or transitional shelters

**Medium Term (within a year)**
- Develop new strategies to move those who are over-housed
- Deactivate applications with no contact for over 24 months

**Longer Term (more than 1 year)**
- Implement new technology solution
4. Enhance Oversight and Strengthen Controls

1. Improving **oversight of RGI vacancies** filled by households that are not selected from the centralized waiting list

2. **Strengthening internal controls over eligibility reviews**, performing reviews of income and assets when people apply for RGI assistance, and correctly determining the amount of RGI assistance

3. Enhancing information system controls to **improve data integrity**

4. Speeding up and enhancing **Human Services Integration**
Re-cap

The City needs to:

1. Improve **data integrity** to know who is actively waiting
2. Review **prioritization of applicants** to consider those most in need
3. Make **better use** of available housing units so more individuals and families can access stable housing
4. Strengthen **controls** and increase **service integration**
Conclusion

1. The findings and recommendations will assist the City in *setting priority actions* to help more individuals and families to achieve stable housing

2. *City management have agreed to all 28 recommendations*

3. *Focus on outcomes*
   - *Fill vacant units*