



# 2010 - 2012 Community Management Plan - Update

**Item 3**  
March 25, 2010

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Date:** March 15, 2010

**Report:** TCHC:2010-29

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## **PURPOSE:**

To provide the Board of Directors with an update on the progress of the Community Management Plan (CMP) for 2010 – 2012.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board receive the report for information.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The Community Management Plan 2010-2012 is our roadmap for the next three years. It sets out the framework for our priorities and strategies, and how we will achieve them. The Plan is revised each year to ensure our objectives are being met, to respond to new issues and take advantage of new opportunities. It builds on our vision and mission, and on our commitment to the residents and communities we serve.

## **Progress to Date**

The writing of the Community Management Plan began with consultations with many stakeholders, with a focus on staff and tenants. Ten staff and tenant consultations occurred in the late fall of 2009, with over 1,000 people taking part. The detailed results of these conversations form the basis for the strategies outlined in this plan.

Next, we held smaller group discussions among key staff representatives. At these meetings, we discussed what we heard at the community consultations, identified the community's priorities, and matched those to the operational reality of the company.

Following the fall consultations and work with senior managers the Community Management Plan is at a draft stage with the overall structure, key outcomes, and major strategies in place.

## **Structure of the Community Management Plan 2010 - 2012**

The Board established initial goals at the Board workshop on the Community Management Plan. They were sustainable communities, empowering tenants, quality service and housing, effective organization and collaborative partnerships. The draft plan is made up of three focus areas each with outcomes supporting strategies. Each of the focus areas incorporates one or more of the goals identified by the Board.

The plan has three major focus areas:

1. Strengthening People
2. Strengthening Places
3. Strengthening Foundation

These areas of strategic focus will guide organizational decision-making over the next three years.

### ***Strengthening People***

We demonstrate our commitment to people through our efforts to build the social capital of tenants. Social mobility depends on the capacity to navigate social systems. One of the best ways to achieve this 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 recognize that a significant number of tenants can become vulnerable to losing 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.

These strategies are grounded in our core function as a landlord. They are multi-year plans that take advantage of our organization's considerable strengths. And they are guided by our determination to work with tenants and community partners to address systemic service gaps and keep tenants in their homes.

In addition, we invest in programs that lead to the social and economic development of our communities. They enable tenants to participate and share in decisions that affect their communities, by providing funding and processes for tenant-led projects that support our strategic priorities.

In 2010-2012, we will strengthen our communities and contribute to the economic and social independence of residents by investing in 1) successful tenancies; 2) economic development; and 3) engaging tenants.

**Successful Tenancies** - We are committed to supporting tenants so that they can maintain healthy, successful tenancies. We want every tenancy to be a successful one. Having successful tenancies means ensuring that all tenants, including those with age-related, mental health or accessibility concerns, are connected to the services that enhance their satisfaction and their sense of belonging to a community. The strategies in this section are Eviction Prevention Strategy, Mental Health Strategies and Senior Tenants Strategy.

**Economic Development** - We recognize that economic and social challenges are interdependent, complex and ever changing. Through local action by staff and tenants, we are helping to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions right here in our neighborhoods. Toronto Community Housing has to date focused on improving the income of the individual. Although this has resulted in laudable achievements, the focus for 2010-12 will be on the economic development of the community. Economic development of a community leads to the economic resiliency of all those who live, work and raise families in that community. Economic development of a community involves a number of strategies: promoting the community as a destination for businesses to invest, grow and prosper; facilitating the development of small businesses and microenterprises to provide sustainable tenant income and asset accumulation opportunities; attracting infrastructure investments such as better public transportation and broadband lines to lay the foundation for a strong community; creating long-term investment and ownership opportunities for residents; and building a holistic and sustainable mixed income resident base to anchor the community. Toronto Community Housing will leverage its procurement system, the \$1.5 billion Housing Works strategy and its broad network of public and private relationships and partners to develop and sustain community economies.

**Engaging Tenants** - Unlike other landlords, we build strong communities by empowering tenants to influence decisions that directly affect their lives. We are proud of this difference. Our tenant engagement system helps us fulfill our commitment of providing quality housing services and helping to create strong communities. The Tenant Engagement System is a vehicle for building relationships, establishing trust and developing understanding of local issues, needs, opportunities and resources. Through engagement, tenants are more empowered to voice issues of concern, seek out or advocate for resources, and directly affect change in their communities.

### ***Strengthening Places***

We strive to provide housing that is in a good state of repair. Over the past seven years, with the support of capital grants totaling more than \$178 million from all three levels of governments, we have invested more than \$630 million in capital improvements, community revitalization and unit refurbishment. Our goal has been, and will continue to be, to achieve and maintain a good state of repair for our housing stock. Good housing stock improves the living conditions of our residents.

However, we recognize that buildings require constant investment to achieve and maintain a state of good repair. Buildings are dynamic systems that age and wear out, and over time all parts of a building deteriorate. This requires good planning, effective preventative maintenance and the need for constant reinvestment.

We have identified the major outcomes to focus on in this plan – 1) well-maintained buildings; 2) valuable community spaces; 3) community safety; and 4) sound investments in real estate assets.

**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. To further support this objective in 2010-2012, we are committing to an enhanced maintenance strategy, clean building strategy and an integrated pest management strategy.

**Valuable Community Spaces** - As Toronto's largest landlord, we realize the value of all our real estate, including the spaces that exist in and around our buildings. We know that in a densely populated and growing city such as Toronto, there is always demand for great, safe, clean, appealing and useful spaces. In 2010-2012, we will work to manage and enhance the spaces in our portfolio to help provide tenants and neighbouring communities with valuable spaces that support social and economic opportunities. We will do this by employing strategies to support community gardening, curb appeal, and use of space.

**Community Safety** - We are committed to improving safety conditions and tenant perception of community safety as part of our support for healthy, livable communities. We take a community-based approach to safety and have

developed integrated teams consisting of staff from our community safety units, buildings, operating units, and community health teams. The teams work closely with the Toronto Police Service, community partners, agencies and citizens to promote safety in communities across Toronto. We strive to enable tenants and staff to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to their community so that they will engage in and take responsibility for positive change. In 2010, we will launch a set of Community Standards that establish protocols on acceptable standards of behaviour in order to better manage anti-social behaviour, continue to strengthen our partnership with the Toronto Police Service, and work with youth and seniors to build safety ambassador programs that encourage personal and community safety.

**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 housing portfolio—which we inherited in 2001 from the provincial government in a poor state of repair—into a valuable asset for tenants and the people of Toronto. *Housing Works* establishes benchmarks that guide investment decisions in the repair, retrofit and revitalization 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.

### ***Strengthening Our Foundation***

Organizational 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 solid business practice. Strengthening our Foundation has five major outcomes – 1) improved customer service; 2) healthy workplaces; 3) maintaining financial discipline; 4) managing risk; and 5) better communications.

**Improved Customer Service** - As a landlord, delivering consistently good customer service is central to what we do. We made several changes over the past year to better serve the needs of tenants. While we believe we are on the right track to meeting our goal of improving the customer experience, we are committed to looking at ways to improve the tenant experience. We'll do this by reorganizing resources and engaging employees around exceptional customer service—more specifically, “first contact resolution.”

**Healthy Workplaces** - Toronto Community Housing recognizes that its greatest strength is its employees. We are proud of our commitment to making this a great place to work, and believe everyone in the organization has a role in doing so. Human rights and equity, social inclusion, and anti-racism are important values to us and they are 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 support a healthy workplace in 2010-2012.

**Maintaining Financial Discipline** - Toronto Community Housing is committed to running an efficient and effective business. This includes low vacancy rates, manageable costs in line with the non-profit sector, and operating within our budget. In our current economic environment, financial pressures are a reality for most businesses. We face a number of financial challenges, including aging buildings, increased utility costs and waste charges, and decreasing revenues from rent-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 focus on making improvements in a number of areas, including: revenue generation, vacancy control, reducing operating costs, and ensuring the appropriate financial controls are in place.

**Managing Risk** - In 2010-2012, we will adopt a robust approach to help us identify and mitigate risks in all areas of our operation including eviction prevention, internal financial controls, waiting lists, procurement, and customer service. Enterprise risk management is a continuous process applied across the company to identify significant events that may negatively impact Toronto Community Housing and to manage multiple risks to an acceptable risk-tolerance level. Enterprise risk management requires a wholesale shift in thinking and culture across the organization. Our goal is to integrate risk management assessments into the fabric of our everyday business at all levels of the organization. We'll start this process in 2010 and continue to implement risk management systems across the organization over the next two years.

**Better Communications** - Effective, timely and strategic communications can increase the effectiveness of Toronto Community Housing's initiatives. Better communications can help build trust and respect, foster more inclusive and engaged communities, and strengthen relationships with key publics. In 2010-2012 and beyond, we will strengthen our public affairs function to improve how we deliver communications to tenants and stakeholders, and how we build relationships with community organizations, service agencies and government

partners. This will be done through an integrated marketing and communications strategy, and tenant and employee communication strategies.

### **Process for Completion**

The major focus areas and elements of the Community Management Plan came out of our consultations with the Board, tenants and staff. We are now going back to a sampling of the same stakeholders and presenting the draft Community Management Plan. We are engaging our stakeholders in this to show them how their ideas and issues are built into the plan and to hear any additional comments they may have. The next steps include:

- Meeting with tenant leaders and staff– late March to early April
- Meeting for community stakeholders – April
- Finalize the Community Management Plan - April
- Community Management Plan to the Board – April 30
- Submission to the Shareholder – May

### **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:**

The Community Management Plan lays out our commitment to our tenants and to community stakeholders. We will be held accountable for delivering what is in our plan. If we are not able to deliver the plan our reputation and ability to work with others will be damaged.

The strategic planning process at Toronto Community Housing directly links the development of the Community Management Plan to our capital planning process and to business planning in each community and Operating Unit. The result is an integrated vision and approach top to bottom and all across the organization. The Community Management Plan will drive divisional workplans and associated activities.

The Community Management Plan will need to be effectively communicated to staff, tenants and other stakeholders. The plan will be printed in hardcopy and posted on the external website. In addition, a summary version of the Community Management Plan will be distributed and be available in multiple languages.

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