

Toronto
Community
Housing

Homeward 2016

Strategic Plan 2013-2015

Homeward 2016 sets out the strategic priorities that will drive Toronto Community Housing to deliver social housing in our city better than ever before.

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We are making a statement about who we are: we build viable communities, maintain homes in good repair and reinvigorate communities that people are proud to call their own.

***That is
OUR
DESTINATION.***

***And this is
OUR PLAN
TO GET THERE.***

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



***Our plan** is to
DRIVE CHANGE
and improvement
to restore our
credibility as
a landlord of
excellence.*

Like many in the social housing sector, Toronto Community Housing faces new realities, continuing financial and social pressures, and increasing demands for more to be done. Yet our work to provide housing for low- and moderate-income Torontonians—many of whom have been priced out of the private rental housing market—is more important than ever.

Our three-year strategic plan, *Homeward 2016*, provides bold and realistic responses to our many challenges. As the largest social housing provider in this city, the province and indeed the country, Toronto Community Housing can and should work across boundaries to identify new ways to respond to the existing and emerging housing needs of its residents.

The board is committed to driving change and improvement to restore Toronto Community Housing's credibility as a landlord of excellence. The journey toward excellence starts with delivering results for residents and changing and improving how we do business. *Homeward 2016* will guide us on this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bud Purves'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'B'.

Norman W. (Bud) Purves
Chair, Board of Directors



*Our plan is to
**CHANGE AND
IMPROVE** how we
work to provide
better homes and
help build better
neighbourhoods.*

Homeward 2016 represents the input of hundreds of staff, residents, community partners and other stakeholders, who provided their thoughts and feedback about what Toronto Community Housing can do, and should be doing, to provide better homes, build better neighbourhoods, and help make Toronto a better city.

This strategic plan acknowledges that our work as a social housing provider goes beyond bricks and mortar to meet the needs of the residents who make Toronto Community Housing their home. *Homeward 2016* speaks to how we can support opportunities and promote better outcomes for all residents, leading to improved well-being for the community. It acknowledges the importance of collaboration with stakeholders, governments, and the private sector to achieve common goals that strengthen the social fabric of our city.

At Toronto Community Housing, we recognize that we must change and improve in order to achieve our vision and deliver our mission. This plan describes both the place we want to be and the steps we will take to get there. I encourage you to read it, talk about it, and watch our progress as we work to **provide better homes and better neighbourhoods that make Toronto a better place to live.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eugene Jones Jr.', written in a cursive style.

Eugene Jones Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer



Our Vision

BETTER HOMES, BETTER NEIGHBOURHOODS, AND A BETTER TORONTO FOR ALL.

We will provide better homes for residents and help build better neighbourhoods. Our work will make Toronto a better place to live by delivering real social value.

Our Mission

Our core business is to provide clean, safe, well-maintained, affordable homes for residents. Through collaboration and with residents' needs at the forefront, we connect residents to services and opportunities, and help foster great neighbourhoods where people can thrive.

Our Values

RESPECT

We respect people as individuals and create environments where fairness, trust and equitable treatment are the hallmarks of how we work.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable for our actions, accept responsibility for our performance and share the results of our work in an open, honest and transparent manner.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

We recognize that we can do more together than alone. We seek out partnerships with residents, the City of Toronto, stakeholders and government to combine efforts and resources in pursuit of common goals.

INTEGRITY

We perform our duties with utmost regard to the high standards expected of a corporation established to deliver social housing.

What we heard

Residents

We consulted residents about the strategic plan and about their concerns in general:

BUILDING CONDITION

- Give residents the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of work
- Involve residents in the cleaning and maintenance of buildings
- Develop and share future capital plans with individual communities

BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT

- Start a public education campaign about the value of social housing
- Advocate for more supportive housing with appropriate support
- Involve residents in fundraising
- Advocate with the governments for a national housing strategy

SAFETY

- Improve the visibility of security staff
- Involve residents in solving security issues
- Improve building safety (better lighting, door security, cameras, safety audits)

SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

- Help residents acquire skills and secure jobs
- Educate residents about community resources that are available to them
- When community organizations want to provide services in buildings, consult with residents who live in those buildings to make sure that the services are aligned with their needs
- Enforce tenancy rules, such as ‘reasonable enjoyment’

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified the need to engage private sector partners, think more creatively and consider social housing as a part of wider neighbourhoods.

For the capital needs of social housing they suggested:

- More energy and water conservation efforts supported by education and training
- Combining the needs and assets of a large group of housing organizations across the GTA to leverage the scale for lower costs and to provide economic benefits
- Finding new sources of funding

Staff

Staff see the following areas where they should focus their efforts:

- Support neighbourhood building and community safety
- Improve building conditions
- Deliver operational excellence and public accountability

Themes

As Toronto Community Housing moves forward with its strategic plan for the next three years these themes will guide us in delivering our services to residents and to our shareholder the City of Toronto.

LANDLORD OF EXCELLENCE

Social Housing 101:
Back to Basics

- Being accountable to the citizens of Toronto
- Being transparent
- Improving economic development and neighbourhood sustainability
- Improving the state of good repair
- Helping reduce criminal behaviour
- Enhancing community safety
- Being fiscally strong
- Being accountable as a landlord to residents and expecting residents to be accountable by becoming more involved in their communities

Challenges

TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE

The way Toronto Community Housing does its business, focuses on residents, organizes its staff, and is accountable to the public is being transformed. While it is a disruptive and difficult process it will create an organization that meets resident and community-wide needs. Communication and a focus on managing the changes will be necessary for success.

FUNDING

The lack of sufficient, stable, long-term funding means we cannot maintain the buildings at the level of quality that we aim for. We have never had funding to provide supportive services and the needs of residents continue to increase. Finding sufficient funding is essential to having sustainable homes and supports for residents.

CREDIBILITY

The City Auditor General issued two reports on employee expenses and procurement. We have made numerous changes to improve oversight and accountability, tighten financial controls, and put in place better management and business practices. We must demonstrate the value of our work, so that residents, the public, media and decision-makers can see the positive impact of social housing on the city as a whole.

CAPACITY

As the corporation is transformed we must increase our employees' capabilities and hold them accountable for their work so they can take on the revised roles we are setting out for them. Training and additional corporate resources will be the methods for building their capacity to deliver on the goals we set out.

MENTAL HEALTH

Many households within Toronto Community Housing are affected by mental health challenges. Most of the time these residents live independently and productively despite their challenges. Some residents are persistently and severely affected and need more support than others. Although we do not provide supportive housing, we have to find ways to connect residents effectively to supports.

INCREASE IN CRIMINAL AND


ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Serious criminal behaviour makes residents feel unsafe in their communities. This is unacceptable and demands improvement. However, much of this behaviour is beyond the control of Toronto Community Housing or residents. We must work together and with the police, the City of Toronto, the business community, agencies and surrounding neighbours to keep residents safe.

Strategic Priority 1

Quality Homes





Our duty is to create better communities that are clean, safe and integrated with their surrounding neighbourhoods

All Toronto Community Housing residents deserve to live in homes that are clean, safe and in good repair.

Housing is a basic human need. Having a clean and secure place to live allows individuals to focus on other aspects of their life, be more productive and participate in society. The foundation of a clean, safe, well-maintained, affordable home enables low-income families and individuals to grow, thrive and focus on achieving the lives they want.

However, Toronto Community Housing has limited revenues and governments are reducing funding for social programs and infrastructure such as housing at the very time it is needed most. The capital repair need is our single greatest obstacle to providing homes that residents can be proud of. The age of our buildings and our inability to close this funding gap further compound this challenge.

A number of potential solutions have been proposed, including those recommended in the special housing working group report, **Putting People First**. We will work with the City and others on those ideas. We believe, as recommended in the report, that the best solution is sustainable capital financing that generates about \$100 million a year for capital repairs and preventive maintenance.

Our Objectives

Over the next three years we will focus our efforts on innovative ways to improve, renew and maintain our housing stock. We will do this by decreasing operating costs, finding new streams of revenue, and engaging all levels of government to reinvest in social housing. We aim to:

1. Improve Building Conditions

We will encourage public and private investment to provide quality affordable homes through the redevelopment, enhancement and preservation of existing assets. We believe that investing in our buildings and houses will also improve neighbourhoods and strengthen communities, in part through a renewed sense of pride of place on the part of residents.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Refinance existing mortgages and invest the resulting funds in the state of good repair of our buildings
- Collaborate with key government agencies and housing partners to develop a sustainable funding model for capital and general maintenance of the asset base and work towards a national affordable housing strategy
- Fund resident priorities that are aligned with overall capital needs through the participatory budgeting program
- Maintain and improve a comprehensive preventative maintenance program that extends the life of building assets

2. Maximize Land Value and Expand Housing Options for Current and Future Residents

We will work with development and construction partners to replace or enhance the value of aging and underperforming assets. As communities are revitalized, we will seek opportunities to work with the City and others to improve neighbourhoods and maximize the value of community infrastructure.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Break ground in Leslie Nymark, Allenbury Gardens, Alexandra Park and Lawrence Heights redevelopment projects
- Continue the revitalization of communities where work is already under way: Regent Park, Railway Lands and West Don Lands
- Explore and implement additional opportunities for redevelopment in neighbourhoods that have necessary density and market potential
- Explore partnerships that enable some residents to purchase houses from Toronto Community Housing

*We will have new
buildings under way
in 8 communities*



3. Maintain the Condition and Quality of New and Repaired Buildings

We will encourage and support increased resident responsibility for minor maintenance and improvement projects.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Provide residents of new, repaired or rehabilitated units with information guides to the operation and maintenance of their homes
- Work with partners to help residents undertake minor repairs
- Encourage and support resident-led improvement and beautification projects
- Support resident-owned businesses in the construction industry
- Support resident employment in construction

Our Targets

Through revitalization and redevelopment, we will:

- Replace or refurbish over 2,200 units through revitalization and redevelopment activities
- Assist up to 30 households to move to affordable home ownership

With our focused capital investment and maintenance plan, we will:

- Invest \$12.5 million from the State of Good Repair Fund for necessary in-unit and common area repairs in up to 16,000 units in 80 high-need communities over 24 months
- Grow the State of Good Repair Fund by at least \$200 million through refinancing mortgages and the approved sale of properties
- Provide \$5 million per year for resident priorities


Through a program of supporting resident responsibility for minor repairs, and resident-led improvement projects, we will:

- Reduce the cost to prepare vacant units that have been built or refurbished since 2012
- Increase resident satisfaction with the quality and condition of their homes and buildings from 67% to 75%

Strategic Priority 2

Vibrant Communities





Our duty as a landlord is to ensure we have safe, healthy, liveable communities where people can thrive.

We aim to create and foster opportunities that contribute to improved well-being for residents and neighbourhood quality of life.

Many Toronto Community Housing residents are among the city's most marginalized. This includes individuals living with low income, disabilities, or who are seniors, newcomers to Canada, or single parent households. They face barriers in terms of access to services and opportunities—factors that contribute to the growing income divide in the city.

A community is vibrant where people are engaged, have opportunities to thrive and play leadership roles to build their communities, and where the neighbourhood is connected to the broader city. Now more than ever is the time to make a real effort to promote and restore the vibrancy of our communities.

Unlike private landlords, Toronto Community Housing exists, in part, to produce social value—that is, to improve the well-being and quality of life of residents. We do this by creating opportunities and connecting residents to programs and services.

Through the implementation of the mental health and seniors' strategies in previous years we have learned how to better assist residents. Our success depends on having the right resources to break down barriers and support conditions for residents to thrive and achieve their potential.

Our Objectives

In 2013 we will reorganize our resources and establish a Resident and Community Services division that focuses on the needs of residents. Over the next three years, we will work to create opportunities for residents to improve their financial situation, access services and supports, and have meaningful involvement in their areas of interest and broader connections to life in the city. We will focus on:

1. Neighbourhood Building and Improved Community Safety

Residents and their neighbours deserve to feel safe in their communities. Safety plays a significant role in our ability to support communities and contribute to a better Toronto. Our Community Safety Unit comprises 107 patrol officers, who work in our communities around the clock to ensure that residents feel safe.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Design and implement community safety plans in collaboration with residents, Toronto Police Services (TPS), the City and other partners where they are needed
- Maintain presence of law-enforcement officers in highneeds communities through our resources and through agreement with TPS
- Take objective and decisive action on disruptive tenancies to resolve community safety concerns
- Install additional security cameras and lighting in high-needs communities supported by on-going safety audits
- Institute regular, local community safety meetings with residents to identify issues and barriers to improved safety
- Work with TPS and residents to improve reporting of criminal behaviour



2. Economic Opportunities

Residents can achieve their full potential when they have access to employment, entrepreneurship or education opportunities, and the city can tap into its most valuable resource: people.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Provide access through partner organizations to micro-financing / small business mentoring and other business capital/infrastructure to seed the development of resident-led businesses
- Focus on attracting business that will employ local residents in well-paying jobs with benefits, especially in revitalized communities
- Partner with community agencies, educational institutions, private donors, businesses and other partners to provide mentorship, co-op/apprenticeship, financial and other supports to better equip young residents for meaningful employment
- Create opportunities to build vibrant businesses to create jobs and a future for residents
- Promote resident-owned property management business to manage Toronto Community Housing property
- Provide more jobs
- Create a program to contract with resident-owned businesses



3. Strengthening Communities and Resident Leadership

Residents can make a difference in their own communities. By enabling them to connect with each other and the rest of the city, their quality of life is enhanced and residents have better access to services and opportunities.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- In each community, develop knowledge about the demographics of residents and the geographic location of community supports
- Identify service gaps and work with residents, agencies, funders and the City to design and implement a neighbourhood-based process to establish and fund a menu of on-site/community focused services
- Work with the City and community partners to renew and promote the use and development of community space and assets with an emphasis on multi-use/shared facilities to broaden access across the community
- Work with residents to design and implement an effective way to engage residents in governance, building on the strengths and needs of each community

4. Supporting Housing Stability

We provide housing to residents from all walks of life. Some of them have struggled with homelessness or mental health issues. Others are aging, frail or isolated. With access to the right supports and services, they can meet their rental responsibilities, be good neighbours and enjoy their homes.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Improve the organization's internal capacity to identify residents who are at-risk and coordinate third-party supports
- Identify needs and service gaps for residents with a history of homelessness, frail and isolated seniors and individuals with mental illness, addictions or special needs
- Work with agencies, funders and the City to bridge service gaps, focusing primarily on communities with a high percentage of residents who need support

Our Targets

By working with residents and the police, we will:

- Have 75% of residents rate their community as safe or safer
- Ensure CCTV systems are operating at industry standards

Through the implementation of a strong economic opportunities program, we will:

- Create 15 full-time job opportunities for youth by the end of 2013
- Support the creation or expansion of 12 resident-led businesses
- Provide access to employment and financial literacy opportunities to 25% of the youth and family residents in our communities by the end of 2015
- Award 30 scholarships to residents annually

By working with residents to strengthen their communities, we will:

- Develop or support 11 multi-use/shared facilities operating through strategic partnerships and resident-led groups to broaden access across the community
- Develop a \$2.5 million fund through fundraising to increase access and participation in neighbourhood opportunities
- Engage 5,000 residents in a broad range of opportunities

By supporting housing stability, we will:

- Develop 10 partnerships in high-needs buildings to provide housing supports for residents
- Connect 600 residents at risk to services that support housing stability



Strategic Priority 3

Service Excellence





Our duty is to put residents at the heart of everything we do.

We are accountable to residents and the citizens of Toronto for the housing we deliver with the dollars invested.

As steward of most of the City's social housing infrastructure, we aim to provide clean, well-maintained, affordable homes that residents need and deserve. Our goal is to deliver consistently excellent service for residents in a fiscally responsible manner. To that end, we are focussing on putting residents at the heart of everything we do, while searching for better and smarter ways to operate.

To achieve service excellence, we need:

- Skilled, capable and adaptable staff in the right roles
- Service delivery systems and processes that enable success
- A strong focus on our cost structure to ensure efficiency while maintaining service

Our Objectives

Over the next three years, we will focus on providing the highest quality service possible for residents with the resources we have. We will work efficiently and effectively, and empower staff to deliver on our service commitments by giving them the right tools to achieve our goals. We aim to:

1. Provide Excellent Customer Service

We will strengthen staff competencies, standardize operating processes, streamline services and technology and hold staff accountable to better respond to residents' needs.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Realign staff and the way we do our work to be more effective and consistent
- Put in place measurable service standards, using industry best practices and use those standards to assess corporate performance and individual staff contributions
- Meet the accessibility needs of residents
- Enhance and build staff skills and ensure staff are effectively managed and equipped with the right tools, systems and supports to do their jobs
- Provide regular training on policies and procedures
- Train residents and staff together to build accountability
- Have residents sign off on workmanship through site checks

2. Increase Revenues

We will increase our efforts to improve management of filling vacancies, subsidy administration and rent collection, working closely with residents and support agencies.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Centralize vacancy management expertise in a group that does all vacancy filling
- Continue to review the policies and procedures that keep arrears low and keep residents housed
- Develop partnerships to deliver financial literacy programs for residents
- Reduce time to get a vacant unit ready



Our Targets

3. Demonstrate Value for Money and Public Accountability

We aim to enable and empower staff to consistently deliver quality service and demonstrate value for money through accountability and a customer-first culture.

2013–2015 ACTIVITIES:

- Introduce bottom-up financial planning to better identify, understand and manage cost pressures and areas for greater economies of scale at the building and portfolio levels
- Implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General and demonstrate our ability to deliver quality, cost-efficient and cost-effective services by:
 - Demonstrating value for money in service delivery
 - Being open and transparent about our actions and performance
 - Telling our story about how our work benefits residents, the neighbourhood, and the city as a whole

Through an increased focus on delivering a positive customer experience at all times, we will:

- Achieve a 75 per cent overall resident satisfaction rating by 2015
- Achieve a 15 per cent increase in resident satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of services
- Reduce the number of unresolved complaints by 10%

Through an increased focus on generating revenue, we will:

- Improve rent calculation accuracy to 95%
- Maintain an eviction rate below 1%
- Increase occupancy rate to 98%
- Increase commercial revenue by 3% per year

Through our increased focus on delivering value for money, we will put in place price controls and process improvements that will:

- Develop building level budgets
- Increase the excess of revenue over expenses by 5% by Q4 2015
- Provide regular, transparent reports on Toronto Community Housing's finances





Delivering on our Plan

Better homes, better neighbourhoods, and a better Toronto for all.

Homeward 2016 is as much about the journey as the destination. We are embarking on a journey that includes familiar paths and, in some cases, new territory. As such, we will refine our operational strategies and actions to move us closer to our goals.

In 2013 we will implement a new corporate performance management framework to gather, analyze and monitor the progress of strategic initiatives. This will enable the Board and executive leadership team to:

- Regularly measure the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives in driving achievement of the desired results
- Make informed decisions about when to revise existing strategies and initiatives to ensure continued progress toward our goals

- Respond quickly and effectively to economic and legislative changes to ensure we stay on course to achieve or exceed our goals
- Demonstrate integrity and promote public accountability for actions taken

We look forward to working with staff, residents, the City of Toronto, senior levels of government, partners, vendors and other stakeholders to make the goals and outcomes described in this plan a reality: providing better homes, working to build better neighbourhoods, and providing the social value that can help make Toronto a better city for all.

*We will deliver clean, safe,
affordable places to live.*

*We will build safe, healthy, liveable
communities where people can thrive.*

*We will put residents at the
heart of everything we do.*







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