

For Information

DATE: April 8, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH): UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services
Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the activities of the Peel Advisory Working Group on Older Adults Housing (PAWGOAH) from June 2009 to March 2010.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In the period from June 2009 to March 2010, the PAWGOAH delivered group presentations to more than 600 people and distributed more information than in any other similar period of its existence
- PAWGOAH developed a new partnership with the Mississauga Real Estate Board and has also strengthened its awareness of community needs by becoming involved with a number of community groups and networks that serve seniors.
- PAWGOAH provided input to two provincial government consultations including the Ministry of Community and Social Services' proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's affordable housing community consultation.
- To help strengthen the focus on accessibility, PAWGOAH provided a presentation on our achievements and obtained suggestions from the Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- PAWGOAH will participate in the Region's efforts to develop a Peel strategy that focuses on support to seniors in collaboration with key departments and community partners.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

In 2001, the Peel Advisory Working Group on Older Adults' Housing (PAWGOAH) was established by Regional Council. It is a multi-stakeholder community-based committee mandated by Council to develop and promote ways of meeting the current and future need for appropriate and affordable rental and ownership housing for older adults in Peel Region. It reports to and seeks direction from Regional Council twice a year.

The PAWGOAH's 21 members include staff from the Region's Human Services, Health and Corporate Services, planners from each of the local area Planning Departments, provincial

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

and federal government representatives, the development industry, older adult residents and Regional Councillors Gibson, Mahoney, Paterak and Whitehead. The PAWGOAH advises Regional Council on the housing needs of Peel's rapidly growing 55-plus population, which is forecast to increase to 613,000 by 2041, nearly tripling the 2006 older adult population of 219, 000.

Over the past five years, approximately seventy per cent of social and supported housing units created in Peel Region have been designated for seniors. The current wait list for seniors' subsidized social housing can be three to seven years, this being dependent on where seniors chose to reside. Currently there are 2568 seniors on the Peel Access to Housing (PATH) Centralized Wait List (CWL) awaiting subsidized housing in Peel. Seniors make up 18% of all applicants on the PATH CWL.

In 2009, PATH housed 227 new senior households in Peel from the CWL. This number accounted for 30% of all those housed from the CWL. The portion of the CWL that excludes households that receive special priority for housing, such as Victims of Family Violence or Medical Priority, is referred to as the chronological portion of the list. In 2009, seniors accounted for 60% of the chronological portion of the CWL. During the same period, PATH also assisted in providing subsidies to an additional 33 senior households via the Insitu priority (i.e. tenants who were switched from market rent to rent-geared-to-income due to financial issues such as a loss of spouse and/or income).

Of the 227 seniors housed in 2009, nine per cent were Victims of Family Violence (i.e. experienced elder abuse); two per cent were due to Medical priority (i.e. less than two years life expectancy); three per cent required wheelchair accessible/modified units and 86 per cent were chronological applicants.

The Region has done well to respond to the needs for housing for seniors as well as for victims of family violence, however due to legislation and funding limitations from senior levels of government, the Region continues to face a serious lack of social housing for families.

2. Key Accomplishments

a) Education and Awareness for Older Adults

From June 2009 to March 2010, the PAWGOAH has delivered 14 presentations to larger groups (over 600 people collectively) and has distributed more information by way of documents than in any other similar period of it's existence (e.g. over 3300 copies of the Guide to Housing Options for the 55 Plus Group, over 2000 copies of the Care Guide and hundreds of copies of other material to participants at presentations).

i) Presentations for Older Adults Groups

The chair, Michael Wright, and staff person Patricia Chrisjohn delivered presentations to the following older adults' groups:

- Streetsville Seniors Club (80 participants)
- Credit Valley Seniors Club (80 participants)
- Brampton Mixed Probus (80 participants)
- Gujarati Seniors Group (70 participants)

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

- Brampton Seniors Fair (15 participants)
(Note: In addition, over 50 people visited the display booth and asked questions)

The sizes of most of the groups in recent presentations were relatively large compared to some of the presentations made in past years. The recent presentations included information from PAWGOAH's housing study, an overview of several housing options, and some of the reasons why some older adults should consider a housing change. Participants thought that the sessions were very informative. Over the past two years, PAWGOAH has presented to five of the thirteen Probus clubs in Peel and all have responded positively. Efforts continue to schedule more presentations to Probus and other seniors clubs.

ii) Presentation to Older Adults, their families and the Real Estate Sector

On October 17th, 2009 Michael Wright and a Care Guide representative delivered presentations to a mixed audience of approximately 60 people, comprised of older adult residents, real estate agents and community agency representatives. Michael's presentation focused on a variety of housing options which were especially helpful to homeowners who are considering downsizing. The Care Guide speaker complemented Michael's presentation by addressing the needs of older adults whose housing needs are affected by a limited income and some health issues. In addition to the presentation, PAWGOAH provided several tables of hand-out material including information provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

iii) Presentation to Newcomer Counsellors

In March, staff made a joint presentation with Halton Region staff on housing options for older adults in Peel and Halton Regions. The audience included almost fifty frontline staff representatives who deals directly with newcomer seniors. The session was sponsored by the Resource Connections Section of the Centre for Education & Training.

iv) Guide to Housing Options for the 55 Plus Group

The Guide to Housing Options for the 55 Plus Group Booklet is updated regularly. Examples of recent enhancements include the following:

- A new article entitled "How Much Does it Cost to Live in a House?" was added. This provides a worksheet for people to calculate their housing expenses as an important assessment tool to help compare current costs to other housing options.
- A description of Chapvelview seniors and singles social housing apartment building was added.
- Several agency contacts were added to two sections: the Support Services section; and, the section relating to Addictions, Abuse and Mental Health Support. These sections, introduced two years ago, now include more than twenty program and service descriptions.

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

v) The Care Guide

The Care Guide magazine is Canada's most comprehensive guide to seniors housing and care services. With its award winning website TheCareGuide.com, The Care Guide has been helping Canadian seniors make informed decisions about their housing and care service options since 1996. In the Greater Toronto Area, 110,000 copies of the Care Guide are distributed annually. In 2008, PAWGOAH partnered with the Care Guide, to produce a series of articles relating to older adults and their families in Peel. In July 2009, the second edition of Peel articles was released. July articles focused on information about the PAWGOAH, social housing in Peel, long-term care, elder abuse, accessible design options for home buyers and also featured Chapelview as one of the newest housing developments for seniors and non-senior singles in Brampton. In addition to the regular broad circulation, more than 2000 booklets were distributed to Peel agencies and through PAWGOAH at various events.

b) Advocacy and Partnerships

PAWGOAH has developed new and strengthened existing partnerships while also advocating for a diverse supply of housing to meet the needs of older adults in Peel. Specifically, the Working Group undertook activities to positively influence the real estate sector, renovators and building accessibility standards. The following sections provide more detail.

i) Real Estate Sector

A new relationship was developed with the Mississauga Real Estate Board which complements the positive experience working with the Brampton Real Estate Board (BREB) in 2008. Chair, Michael Wright facilitated several training courses to MREB and BREB with a focus on the housing needs of home buyers and sellers in the 55 plus group. Evaluations were very positive.

ii) Renovator Sector

PAWGOAH staff developed an information package that was mailed to local renovators in Peel informing them of the increasing need for home renovations for aging and accessibility. Specific information was provided on programs offered by the CMHC which renovators can share with their future clients to make it financially feasible for them to eliminate physical barriers in their own homes. It also included a recent newspaper article which highlighted the success of a renovator who understands accessibility needs of older residents and who is building a niche for himself in this area.

iii) Accessibility-Related

In October, 2009, PAWGOAH provided input to the Ministry of Community and Social Services with regard to a proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard. This is one of five standards that are being created as a result of the passing of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. The purpose of the standards is to improve accessibility in the areas of customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment and the built environment.

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

In November 2009, PAWGOAH provided an update report and presentation to the Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). PAWGOAH continues to work closely with the AAC given their common interest in housing with accessibility features appropriate for older adults and/or persons with disabilities.

iv) Housing Strategy

PAWGOAH representatives provided input to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's affordable housing community consultation at a public session held in June. As well, PAWGOAH is regularly updated by staff and has provided input to the development of the Region of Peel Housing Strategy.

v) Community Agencies and Networks

Over the past year, PAWGOAH has strengthened its awareness of community needs by becoming a member of the following three community agencies or networks:

The Peel Elder Abuse Prevention Network (PEAPN):

Regional staff are working with PEAPN to promote support available to the public through the Region's Housing Options for the 55 Plus Group in Peel guide book. As well, Regional staff will collaborate with PEAPN to promote awareness of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day which is on June 15th. It is interesting to note that many more seniors were housed in 2009 from the CWL as a result of elder abuse in comparison to those requiring wheelchair accessible units in combination with those who required priority housing due to a terminal illness. It has been noted by experts in the field that the number of seniors experiencing abuse is much higher than the number of reports that are made.

PEAPN has requested to make a presentation to General Committee on May 6, 2010 and will request Council to proclaim June 15, 2010 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in the Region of Peel. Peel Region supports and participates in a wide range of collaborative activities related to support for older adults including a close working relationship with the Peel Elder Abuse Prevention Network (PEAPN).

The Coalition of Agencies Servicing Immigrant Seniors (CASIS):

Regional staff from Human Services and Health Services are resource members of this newly formed coalition. The mission of CASIS is to be a collective voice engaging various stakeholders to enhance the quality of life for Immigrant Seniors in Peel. Key objectives include promoting and supporting the coordination of services for Immigrant Seniors and working in partnership with funding bodies/decision-makers to inform and communicate for equitable allocation of resources. Participants who attend CASIS meetings are currently confirming their official membership. Total membership may amount to over twenty members from not-for-profit and government agencies serving Immigrant Seniors in Peel.

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

Stakeholders Committee of Nance Horwood Supported Housing Apartments:

The Purpose of this committee is to enhance, promote and facilitate the health of older adults living with mental illness, addictions and/or concurrent disorders and who reside in the City of Brampton and receive service through the Nance Horwood Supported Housing Apartments project. This committee reviews and addresses identified needs, gaps and challenges. Regional staff are resource members of this committee

Role of Health Services:

A representative from Health Services is a member of this Advisory Working Group and it should be noted that over the past two years, a complementary health perspective has enhanced PAWGOAH products. This includes the addition of the health information in the PAWGOAH Housing Options for the 55 Plus Group in Peel Region booklet as well as through the Peel articles in the Care Guide. As well, staff from both departments are involved community groups such as the Coalition of Agencies that Serve Immigrant Seniors.

3. Proposed Direction

In identifying priorities for upcoming year, the PAWGOAH leadership team identified initiatives to support affordable housing for low and middle income older adults. The PAWGOAH leadership team is working with Human Services staff to develop an initiative for 2010.

As a new way of doing business, the PAWGOAH will hold general meetings at older adult housing developments. Meetings will include tours to show members the distinctive features that make homes appropriate for older adults. The first of such meetings was held in June meeting at the Walker Road Seniors Peel Living apartment building in Caledon East. .

As part of PAWGOAH's communications strategy, the group will make ongoing improvements to the housing options booklet and website pages. As well, a new name and acronym that is shorter and easier for the public to remember and access, is being developed. .

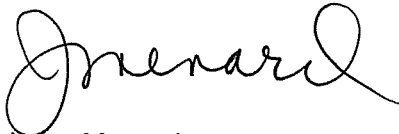
PAWGOAH will also seek to work with area municipal planning staff to identify best practices that may support the development of housing and communities that are age-friendly. This work is part of a broader initiative in which the Region will endeavour to develop a Peel strategy that focuses on support to seniors in collaboration with key departments and community partners.

April 8, 2010

**PEEL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON OLDER ADULTS' HOUSING (PAWGOAH):
UPDATE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM JUNE 2009 TO MARCH 2010**

CONCLUSION

Overall, PAWGOAH is becoming widely recognized and has made significant strides in promoting the development of full range of housing types for older adults in Peel.



Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services



Janette Smith
Commissioner of Health Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact
Pat Chrisjohn] at extension 3561 or via email at pat.chrisjohn@peelregion.ca*

Authored By: Pat Chrisjohn, Carolyn Clubine and Chrstina Horvari

c. Legislative Services