Region of Peel
Working for you

HS-B1-1

REPORT
Meeting Date: April 26, 2012
Regional Council

For Information

DATE: March 26, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **HOUSING IN PEEL: REPORT THREE (2011 UPDATE ON CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST AND IMPACT OF HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN)**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide a 2011 profile of the Region's Centralized Wait List (CWL), as well as an update on the progress of the Housing Investment Plan to increase access to affordable housing in Peel.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2011, 848 new households received subsidized housing from the Centralized Wait List (CWL); of these households, 34 per cent were Victims of Family Violence (VOFV) who receive priority under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, 50 per cent were chronological applicants, and 16 per cent were other priorities.
- As of December 31, 2011, the CWL for subsidized housing in Peel stood at 12,853 households. This represents a 16 per cent decrease from the previous year (e.g., 15,341 as of December 31, 2010).
- This decrease is due to recent efforts to streamline administrative processes including annual confirmation from applicants of continued interest in subsidized housing.
- Peel has the longest waiting period for subsidized housing in Ontario with families waiting up to 11 years for housing with three and four bedroom units in all-age housing communities and up to seven years for units in senior-designated housing communities.
- Factors that contribute to the long waits include: desirability of Peel as a place of residence; high population growth; poverty; lingering effects of recession; low vacancy rates; limited size/mix of social housing stock; legislated priority of VOFV.
- New regional subsidies approved under the Housing Investment Plan (November 2011) have already resulted in increased access to affordable housing by applicants who are chronologically-disadvantaged and local priority households.
- The percentage of those housed with subsidies from the total CWL has increased from 5.2 per cent in 2010 to 6.6 per cent in 2011, which brings it closer in line with the 2009 GTA average of 6 per cent.

DISCUSSION

The following report provides a 2011 profile of the Region's Centralized Waiting List (CWL), as well as an update on the progress of the Housing Investment Plan to increase access to affordable housing across the housing system in Peel (see Appendix I). Increasing access to appropriate housing and preventing homelessness is a Term of Council Priority (#7) for Regional Council for 2011-2014. The report information is set out as follows:

1. Background (outlining Peel's obligation under the *Housing Services Act, 2011)*
2. 2011 Profile of Peel's CWL
   a. Applicants on Peel Region's CWL as of December 31, 2011
   b. Applicants Housed in Peel Region from CWL in 2011
3. 2011 Profile of Peel's Social Housing Stock: Capacity, Unit Size and Mix
4. Factors Affecting Peel's CWL
5. Housing Investment Plan Update

1. Background

On January 1, 2012, Ontario proclaimed the *Housing Services Act* (*HSA),* which replaced the *Social Housing Reform Act, 2000.* The new legislation integrates the funding, planning and delivery of housing and homelessness prevention programs under an overarching integrated human services framework. It also requires that municipalities, in their role as Service System Managers, develop integrated Housing and Homelessness Plans (Local Plans) with a 10 year planning horizon by January 1, 2014.

The *HSA* is designed to simplify and streamline the administration and complexities of Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Housing, although new income testing regulations are not expected to be in place until 2013. The Act also requires greater program/policy flexibility and decision-making at the local level. Regional staff has begun the consultations with stakeholders to inform these decisions and will be reporting back to Council periodically throughout this process.

The *HSA* calls for greater flexibility on approaches to wait list management and local priorities, but continues to require that Peel, in its role as Service System Manager:

- Maintain and monitor a chronological CWL for the majority of Peel's social housing providers (including Peel Living) and Rent Supplement programs;
- Accept applications from those who are: legal residents of Canada; in receipt of subsidy within/outside the service manager area; and, on wait lists in other areas;
- Maintain a minimum service level of 8,261 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidies (level has remained unchanged since download of social housing to municipalities in 2001);
- Give first priority to housing Victims of Family Violence (VOFV) under its Special Priority Policy (SPP) for those units administered under the Act;
- Remove applicants from the CWL after declining three offers of housing of their choice;
- Place over-housed tenants on the CWL with original dates for transfer to smaller units.

Collectively, the 46 social housing providers governed by the *HSA* account for a mixed market rent and RGI portfolio of over 15,000 units; Peel Living operates over half of those units. Peel exceeds our legislated service level standards by providing an additional 11,000 plus subsidies (primarily RGI, but also short term Housing Allowances/Rent Supports to support some clients while they wait on the CWL for permanent subsidies/housing).

2. 2011 Profile of Peel's CWL

Compared with other service managers in Ontario, Peel has the:

- second largest waiting list in the province at 12,853 households in 2011 (Toronto has the largest waiting list with 82,138 households as of December 2011)
- highest demand for family units across the province with 56 per cent of applicants requesting two and three bedrooms, compared to a 2009 GTA average of 47 per cent;
- longest waiting period for access to RGI housing with an average of 7.8 years for chronological families and 1.4 years for VOFV (2009 GTA averages are 4.1 years for chronological and 1.1 years for VOFV by comparison)
- highest increase in the percentage of those housed with subsidies from the total CWL from 5.2 per cent in 2010 to 6.6 per cent in 2011; this is more aligned with the 2009 GTA average of 6 per cent. (Note: GTA Data Source is The SPP Impact Study, Phase 1 Data Analysis Peel Region, Dec. 2011: Social Housing Service Corp./Housing Services Corp.)

The number of households on the CWL decreased 16 per cent compared to 2010 (15,341 in 2010 to 12,853 in 2011). This is primarily due to recent rigorous efforts to streamline administrative processes, including requiring applicants to annually confirm their continued interest in subsidized housing in Peel.

Other key administrative and service improvements include: discussing the selection of preferred buildings with applicants closer to when they would be offered a placement; and working with new clients in a more holistic manner by enabling them to apply for multiple programs (e.g., child care subsidy, social assistance) at the same time. As well, applicants can now apply on-line, by telephone, mail or in person through the Integrated Intake and Assessment unit.

Outlined below is a high level profile of households on Peel's CWL at December 31, 2011.

a) Applicants on Peel Region's CWL as of December 31, 2011

i. Household Composition

- Of 12,853 households on the CWL; 72 per cent reside in Peel
- 80 per cent (10,250) of households are eligible for all-age housing communities (families and singles) and 20 per cent (2,603) for senior-designated housing communities (here to referred to as senior housing communities)
- 55.4 per cent are families; 24.4 per cent are single non-seniors; 20.2 per cent are seniors
- 94 per cent are chronological applicants; 5 per cent are approved VOFV applicants; 1 per cent is other priorities
- 1 per cent or 147 of all applicants qualify for a modified/accessible unit

ii. Requests by Unit Type

- All-age housing communities: bachelor unit: 1 per cent; one bedroom: 33 per cent; two bedroom: 30 per cent; three bedroom: 26 per cent; four bedroom: 10 per cent
- Senior housing communities: bachelor/one bedroom: 98 per cent; two bedroom: 2 per cent

iii. Length of Time of Applicants on CWL

- 2,575 new applications were received in 2011: 9 per cent were from seniors
- 52.4 per cent of all applicants have waited three years or less (applied 2009-2011)
- 23.4 per cent of all applicants have waited four to six years (applied 2006 -2008)
- 16.3 per cent of all applicants have waited seven to nine years (applied 2003-2005)
- 7.9 per cent of all applicants have waited 10 years or more

b) Applicants Housed in Peel Region from CWL in 2011

i. Household Composition of Applicants Housed

In 2011, 500 households received Short-Term Rent Supports, through a three-year provincial program introduced in late 2010 by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. These clients are not counted in the 2011 housed data as they continue to remain on the CWL awaiting ongoing RGI subsidized housing.

In addition, 848 CWL households received new RGI housing subsidies in 2011, compared to 820 households in 2010. Of the 848 households:

- 699 (82 per cent) were housed in all-age housing communities
- 149 (18 per cent) were housed in senior housing communities
- 382 (45 per cent) were rent supplements funded under the Housing Investment Plan
- 34 per cent of all those housed (all-age and senior housing communities) were VOFV; 50 per cent were chronological, 13 per cent were local priorities (e.g. medical, over-housed, market tenants eligible for RGI); and 3 per cent were special needs
- 37.1 per cent of those housed in all-age communities were VOFV; 47.6 per cent were chronological; 11.9 per cent were local priorities (e.g., medical, over-housed, market tenants eligible for RGI); and 3.4 per cent were special needs
- 21.5 per cent of all those housed in senior housing communities were VOFV; 62.4 per cent were chronological; 13.4 per cent were local priorities (e.g., medical, over-housed, market tenants eligible for RGI); and 2.7 per cent were special needs

Peel's placement rate for VOFV as a proportion of total housed has steadily decreased from 80.3 per cent in 2006 to 34 per cent in 2011. This aligns Peel's rate more closely with the 2009 GTA average of 33.5 per cent (SPP Impact Study). The decrease is largely due to low turnover rates in stock administered under the *HSA*, improved verification procedures for priority eligibility, and Peel's ability this past year to target chronologically disadvantaged applicants with additional regional Housing Investment Plan funds.

ii. Length of Time Applicants were on Wait List When Housed

In 2010, staff advised Council that we had changed the method of calculating wait times from projected to actual as the projection method was not used by other service managers. The length of time on the wait list depends on many factors, including priority-type, building choice, size and availability of units. For example, some over-housed applicants appear as being on the CWL over 20 years because their applications are backdated to their original application/move-in date while they await a transfer to a smaller unit. By contrast, those housed in designated supportive housing units flow quickly through the CWL as supportive agencies are able to place clients in a few days.

Those applicants housed with new subsidies in 2011 waited an average of 7.17 years. The breakdown by household composition and unit type in 2011 is as follows:

- Singles requiring a one-bedroom unit had waited 8-9 years
- Families requiring two-bedroom units had waited 6-8 years
- Families requiring three or four-bedroom units had waited 8-11 years
- Seniors requesting a unit in a senior's building had waited 5-7 years
- VOFV waited 1-3 years because of their priority SPP status

The waiting times for chronological and local priority (non-VOFV) groups housed in 2011 are less than in 2010 when some waited up to 15 years on average to receive subsidies. This decrease indicates that the new regional subsidies recently approved in the Housing Investment Plan have already resulted in the intended increase in access to affordable housing by those applicants who are chronologically-disadvantaged.

iii. Seniors Housed from CWL in Senior Housing Communities

The average wait time for seniors applying for housing in senior housing communities increased slightly from 3-7 years in 2010 to 5-7 years in 2011. The shorter wait time in 2010 is a result of a new seniors/single building (Chapelview) opening, which enabled an additional 139 people from the CWL to be housed with subsidies. Of that number, 82 were seniors. New builds, like the 378 seniors units currently under construction, will have a positive impact on the wait list in the year they open because of the larger number of people who are able to move in. However, once a new building is fully rented, it is subject to the similar unit turnover rates experienced in more established housing communities.

Some municipalities in Ontario are currently tracking statistics on newcomers (including seniors) who are on their respective housing wait lists; the Region of Peel does not currently conduct this type of analysis.

As seniors stay healthier longer and obtain supports from supportive housing agencies to age in place, the unit turnover rates in established senior housing communities are expected to decrease, further limiting access to the existing seniors housing stock. In addition to building new stock, initiatives are underway that will help some seniors to receive RGI subsidies where they currently rent within the private or not-for-profit sectors. In 2011, 31 seniors received subsidies without having to move, enabling them to age in place and the landlords to retain good longstanding tenants. Legal secondary suites also provide an opportunity to provide rent supplements to seniors (and others) who wish to remain in their community or close to family.

Another Term of Council Priority (#11) is to assess the impacts of the aging population on health and human services delivered. This priority has highlighted the need to plan for the impact of Peel's aging population on the availability of affordable seniors housing and the role of housing for seniors. Additional research planned for the second phase of this work will provide valuable information about the changing needs of the seniors' population in Peel. It will allow future planning and programming to adapt to best support seniors living in or applying for housing in Peel. The Region will continue to engage our supportive agencies who support seniors currently living in our housing units as we plan and prepare for growing and changing pressures from an aging population.

3. 2011 Profile of Peel's Social Housing Stock: Capacity, Unit Size and Mix

To fully understand the factors affecting Peel's CWL and lengthy waiting periods, it is important to understand the capacity, unit size and mix of the available stock. Table 1 below outlines the social housing stock by local municipality, including the Region's rent supplement program (operated primarily with private landlords throughout Peel Region). This table indicates that the majority of social housing units are in Mississauga.

Table 1: Municipal Breakdown of Social Housing in Peel Region, 2011

Municipality	All-age Rent Supplement	All-age Housing Units	Senior Housing Units	Total by Municipality
Brampton	848	2,433	1,183	4,464
Caledon	7	52	206	265
Mississauga	1,690	7,199	1,629	10,518
Total by Unit Type	*2,545*	*9,684*	*3,018*	*15,247*

Notes:
1. All age units indicate housing for singles and families (inclusive of seniors who wish to live in all-age communities); seniors' units are designated/purpose built housing for people who are 65 years or older;
2. Totals reflect both market rent units and RGI; these totals exclude Home Ownership Programs.
3. This data excludes information for nine federal co-cops that are not administered under the SHRA.

Table 2 provides a close look at the size and mix of the social housing portfolio. The table indicates that 23 per cent of Peel's social housing stock is three and four bedrooms, compared to the higher demand for units this size at almost 36 per cent of the CWL.

Table 2: Social Housing Units in Peel Region, by Unit Size and Mix, 2011

Municipality	Total	B	1- BR	2- BR	3- BR	4- BR	Other
Brampton	3,616	44	1,561	1,143	730	130	8
Caledon	258	0	179	53	22	4	0
Mississauga	8,828	246	2,944	3,365	1,899	311	63
Rent Supplement	2,545	26	1,408	649	405	57	0
Total by Unit Type	*15,247*	*316*	*6,092*	*5,210*	*3,056*	*502*	*71*

Notes:
1. "Other" category includes units found in group homes and shelters.
2. The number of modified/wheelchair accessible units is 425 (approx. 3 per cent of the total stock).
3. 15 supportive housing agencies have agreements with housing providers and the rent supplement program to help clients with physical/mental health challenges live independently in 660 designated supportive housing units; the agencies manage their own wait lists and coordinate new placements through CWL upon turnover in these designated units

The overall impact of the size and mix of available stock is evident when examining the portfolio capacity related to four bedroom units more closely. There are a total of 492 such units in the total housing portfolio, yet 1,003 households are in need of a unit this size, which clearly demonstrates how demand outpaces supply. In 2011, 19 families were housed in four bedroom units compared to 21 families in 2010. The good news is that new projects currently underway will result in 170 additional 3 to 5 bedroom units over the next few years.

4. Factors Affecting Peel Region's CWL in 2011

The size of the wait list and length of current wait times are directly related to the cumulative effect of the following socio-economic and demographic factors:

- *Desirability of Peel as a Place of Residence*: known for its diverse employment opportunities and network of schools, spiritual, cultural and community services.
- *High Population Growth:* based on 2011 census data, Peel had the third highest growth rate of regional or single-tier municipalities in Ontario. Between the years 2006-2011, Peel's population grew about 27,470 people per year. By 2031, the Region's population is expected to be 1.64 million.
- *High Poverty Rates*: 13 per cent of families, 13.4 per cent of seniors and 33 per cent of recent immigrants live in poverty; 14.5 per cent of Peel residents have incomes that would qualify them to be on the CWL (2006 Census).
- *Insufficient availability*, size and mix of affordable housing stock (see Section 3).
- *Low Unit Turnover in Subsidized Housing*: resulting from (1) increased health and home supports which enable seniors to age in place; (2) the lingering effects of the 2008-2009 economic recession and slow job growth; (3) the effectiveness of eviction prevention programs by housing providers; and (4) the stabilizing impact of the Region's mortgage and rental arrears assistance programs.
- *Low Vacancy Rates in the Private Market*: at the lowest rate across the Greater Toronto Area in 2011 at 1.4 per cent (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Market Report, 2001-2011).

- *One Time Rent Up Effect of New Builds/Subsidies*: movement off the CWL temporarily increases when new units/subsidies are created; e.g., in 2010, two developments (230 units) opened, compared to one 26-unit development in 2011.

- *Historical Absence of New Subsidies:* new affordable housing programs provide capital subsidies only; although 139 CWL applicants moved into Chapelview in 2010, their subsidies were redirected from within the existing rent supplement program. A new financial model for all new development builds in RGI and ensures new builds equate to CWL reduction.

- *Impact of Legislated Priority for Victims of Family Violence* (Special Priority Policy) (SPP) on Chronological Applicants: in 2011, VOFV were 5 per cent of the CWL and 34 per cent of all applicants housed, compared to chronological applicants who were 94 per cent of the CWL and 50 per cent of those housed (HSC's SPP Impact Study: Phase 2 is underway examining the housing-related needs of VOFV).

- *Administrative Improvements in CWL process*: includes a requirement that applicants confirm continued eligibility and interest in remaining on CWL annually.

5. Housing Investment Plan Update

On November 24, 2011, Council approved the Region of Peel Housing Investment Plan, 2011-2031, which outlines several different housing initiatives aimed at reducing wait times for access to affordable housing in Peel. Council endorsed the recommendation that the ongoing funding of $17.1 million be used for operational housing initiatives.

The plan proposed four strategic directions described in more detail below. Upon full implementation, the plan will support 2,650 households (including over 1,700 new RGI subsidies) on an on-going basis and provide one-time assistance to 3,839 households for a variety of housing initiatives over the next 20 years. This plan will be integrated into the development of Peel's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, along with other planning documents such as Peel's Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy.

a) Strategic Direction 1: Increase the Number of Rental Assistance Recipients

This direction includes several initiatives designed to increase the number of rental assistance recipients. Accomplishments to date include:

- 382 new subsidies were provided primarily to those with medical priorities and chronologically-disadvantaged clients with this additional regional funding
- 50 new rent supplement agreements were signed with private landlords and Housing Providers, with a focus on providing RGI subsidies to CWL applicants where they currently resided (known as 'insitu') in both private and not for profit buildings
- 31 seniors were able to age in place, and over 300 families were able to remain in their communities, with no need to change schools as a result of this insitu approach
- 111 subsidies were created to stabilize supportive agency tenancies and recession impacted households
- 35 subsidies were created to stabilize those at risk due to the loss of provincial/federal funds

- A portable and choice-based subsidy pilot program has been designed and launched where a fixed amount housing allowance or ongoing RGI is paid directly to the participant, or to an approved landlord where the participant currently resides, or finds through an independent rental search

b) Strategic Direction 2: Increase Rental Housing Supply

Since there is a limited amount of existing private rental housing where rental assistance can be provided and little new rental housing is being created by the private market, it is important to also expand the supply. Progress to date includes:

- 769 Affordable Housing Program (AHP) units under construction in four projects, providing 378 seniors and 391 all-age units; 318 of these households will receive subsidy either through Housing Investment Plan rent supplements and internally under the building's financial model.
- Of the above, 344 AHP units are expected to be available by the end of 2012 (219 seniors and 125 all age); 138 of these will receive subsidies through the Housing Investment Plan or internal subsidies.
- Issuance of a Request for Proposal and Expression of Interest designed to invite a broad range of innovative community and private proposals to increase the supply of affordable rental housing in Peel. This two-pronged approach will allow the opportunity to explore options that are construction ready in the short- and mid-term, as well as long-term projects that are in the early conceptual stage. Community partners will be included as part of both processes.
- Over $15 million in 2011 Housing Investment Plan funding was placed in reserves to further leverage $31.73 million in Investment in Affordable Housing funding allocated by the province in 2011 over a four year period.
- Program and policy development of a new Peel Renovates program that is intended to assist with residents requiring accessibility, health and safety related renovations enabling them to maintain their current housing.

c) Strategic Direction 3: Increase Access to Homeownership

This strategic direction will increase access to affordable homeownership and help move people along the continuum to become homeowners. Progress to date includes:

- A January 2012 re-launch of the Home in Peel program has resulted in 30 new loans in 2012, for a total of 263 new home purchases assisted to date. It is expected there will be an additional 50 loans processed every year.
- Exploring partnership options with Habitat for Humanity which may increase affordable home ownership opportunities for up to 157 households on the CWL or currently living in social housing by 2021. Three households could potentially be assisted in 2012.

d) Strategic Direction 4: Enhance Housing Stability

This strategic direction assists with the prevention of homelessness and retention of housing by helping people stabilize their housing. Achievements to date include:

- St. Leonard's Place building expansion is complete and ready to begin accepting residents and will be fully operational by the end of April 2012.

- In 2012, the Housing Investment Plan funding will be used to supplement the demand for arrears assistance on provincial and regional funding programs which, in 2011, supported 241 tenants and 32 homeowners with rental and mortgage arrears payments, respectively.

While the Housing Investment Plan does not specifically set our advocacy initiatives, both Council and staff continue to advocate for affordable housing with senior levels of government, including the need for more capital and ongoing operational (e.g., rent subsidy) funding. One example of the Region's advocacy efforts includes supporting Mayor Fennell's participation as co-chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Big City Mayors Caucus Advocacy Working Group on Housing, which recently released a report titled "The Housing Market and Canada's Economic Recovery" (January 2012). The report examined the lack of affordable housing and ways to protect and increase the stock of private affordable market rent housing. A Council report is forthcoming on this FCM report. Key recommendations included:

- Low-interest loans underwritten by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to finance new rental construction;
- Tax reform to encourage owners to renovate and retain rental properties, providing an incentive to preserve affordable rental housing;
- Help for landlords to make rental housing energy efficient, reducing costs and easing pressure on rents.

CONCLUSION

Affordable housing continues to be a scarce commodity for people wanting to live in Peel Region. Peel continues to have the second largest waitlist and longest waiting period for subsidized housing in Ontario, with families waiting up to 11 years for three and four bedrooms in all-age communities and seniors waiting up to seven years for housing in senior communities.

Nonetheless, additional Regional funding made available through the Housing Investment Plan has already resulted in increased access to affordable housing by those who are chronologically-disadvantaged applicants. Based on the impact of this plan, it is expected Peel's placement rates for chronological and VOFV households will stay more aligned with those experienced by other GTA-based service managers. Moreover, administrative-based initiatives such as annual confirmation of applicants' continued interest in subsidized housing will help ensure that Peel's CWL remains current.

In our collective efforts to address the need for affordable housing in Peel, the Region continues to work in partnership with the broader community, senior levels of government and other stakeholders to achieve our Term of Council Priority #7: increase the supply of appropriate housing options to address the need for affordable housing for all residents of Peel. Regional staff will regularly report back to Council to provide updates on the expected on-going positive impact of the Housing Investment Plan, as well as the effect of other complementary efforts to increase access to affordable housing in Peel.

J Menard

Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:

David Szwarc

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Joan Kaczmarski at extension 7242 or via email at joan.kaczmarski@peelregion.ca

Authored By: Daniel Beemsigne, Joan Kaczmarski, Allison Martin and Geoff McIlroy

c. Legislative Services

HS-B1-12

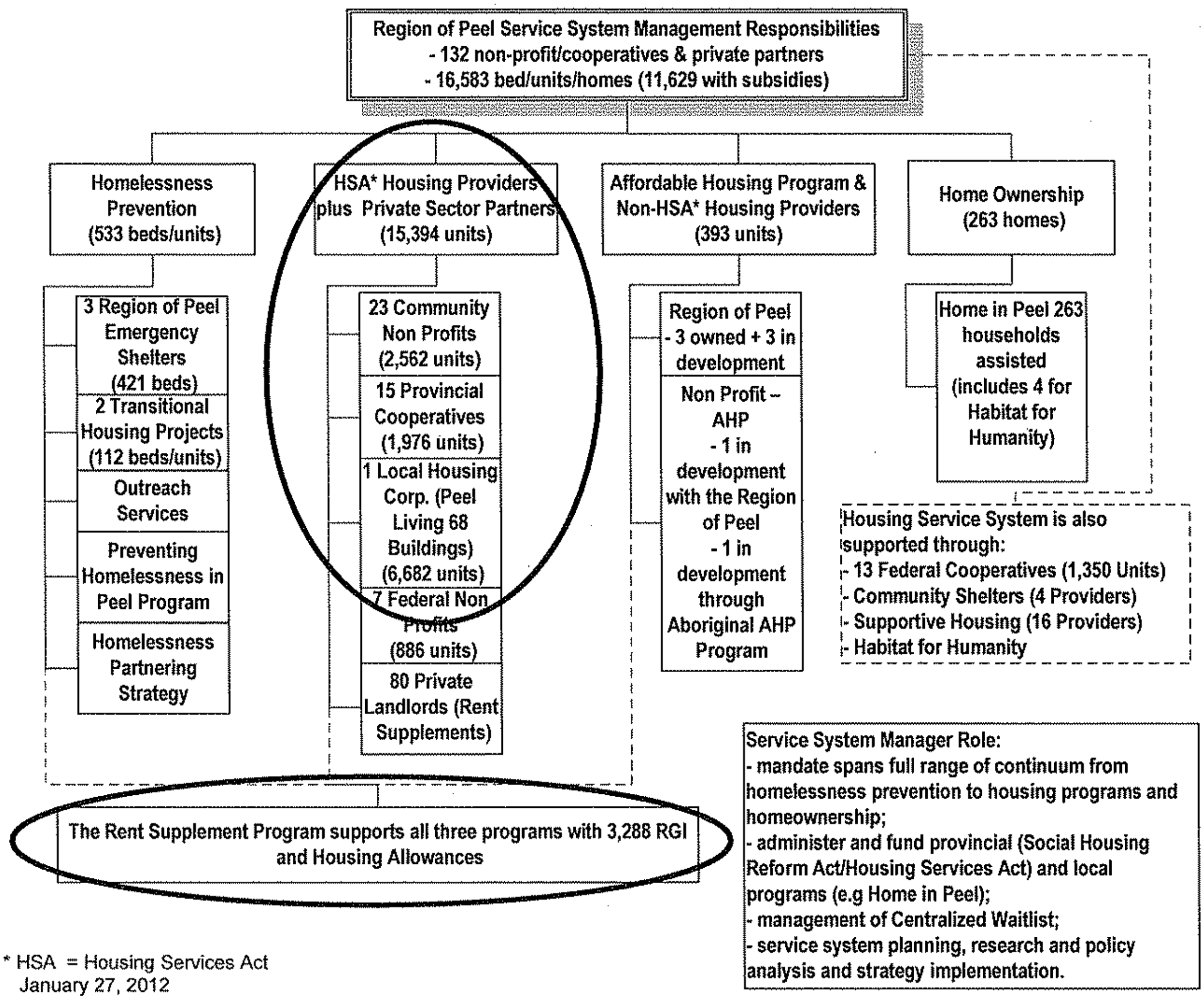
March 26, 2012

HOUSING IN PEEL: REPORT THREE (2011 UPDATE ON CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST AND IMPACT OF HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN)

APPENDIX I

Region of Peel Housing System

This report affects the circled areas.



* HSA = Housing Services Act
January 27, 2012