

# INFORMATION SHEET

“STANDING UP FOR UNIONVILLE”

[www.unionvilleratepayers.com](http://www.unionvilleratepayers.com)

**TOPIC:** AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**LAST UPDATE:** January 21, 2011

**URA CONTACTS:**

Mike Gannon ([mtgannon@rogers.com](mailto:mtgannon@rogers.com)) Committee Chair

Peter Miasek ([dmiasek@rogers.com](mailto:dmiasek@rogers.com))

Adam Poon ([poon.canada@gmail.com](mailto:poon.canada@gmail.com))

Reid McAlpine ([Reid.McAlpine@PearsonEd.com](mailto:Reid.McAlpine@PearsonEd.com))

Harry Eaglesham ([hjeagle@aol.com](mailto:hjeagle@aol.com))

## Context

The Province recently released the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006). The Growth Plan is the provincial plan for managing growth and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to the year 2031. The Region of York recently adopted major changes to its official plan to conform to the Province’s policies on growth. The Town of Markham is currently undertaking a number of initiatives to meet both the Province’s and Region’s policy direction on managing growth and development to 2031. Included in these initiatives are the Town’s Preferred Growth Alternative, the Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan, the Integrated Leisure Master Plan, and the Affordable and Special Needs Housing Strategy.

## What is affordable and special needs housing?

For Markham specifically, “affordable housing” means affordable by households earning less than \$103,453 (approximately 46,128 households or 60% of households in 2006) and a maximum affordable house price of \$384,138. For renters, it represents renter households earning less than \$39,880 (approximately 1,711 households or 20% of households in 2006) and a maximum monthly rent of \$997.

“Special needs housing” is used by people who have specific needs beyond economic needs, including but not limited to, needs such as mobility requirements or support functions required for daily living.

“Social housing” is a subset of affordable housing and means housing that is subsidized or provided as rent-geared-to-income housing.

## What is the status of affordable and special needs housing in Markham?

The Town has hired external consultants to develop a strategy. A stakeholder consultation meeting was held in May 2010 and a draft document was published for discussion in June 2010. This is available at:

[http://www.markham.ca/Markham/Departments/NewsCentre/PubMtg/100720\\_affordablehousingcomment.htm](http://www.markham.ca/Markham/Departments/NewsCentre/PubMtg/100720_affordablehousingcomment.htm)

The municipal elections last year have delayed the presentation of this subject to Council. It is now expected to be presented in early February. Work is still going on, but needs council approval to accept the report and task Staff to proceed. The draft document is fairly complex but the following extract gives a good idea of the overall suggested policy direction;

*“In keeping with the Markham Preferred Growth Alternative, adopt annual housing targets for new development as follows: 27% singles/semis, 19% townhouse, and 54% apartments. Further, that an annual target of 25% rental and 75% ownership also be adopted for new housing development.”*

## **Second Suites/Second Units**

This refers to the practice of homeowners offering rental accommodation within some portion of their home, usually but not necessarily, a basement. Second suites have the potential to positively impact the supply of rental accommodation, and hence contribute to the supply of affordable housing. In the Fall of 2010 the Ontario Government tabled proposed legislation as follows;

*“To further expand affordable housing opportunities, amendments would be introduced to the Planning Act to require municipalities to establish policies allowing second units in new and existing developments. Second units are private, self-contained residential units with their own kitchen and bathroom, either located in a house or as accessory units, such as above laneway garages.”*

The presentation to Council of the proposed affordable housing strategy is expected to trigger a discussion as to whether the Town should adopt a proactive approach to the Ontario Government’s proposals. The URA will continue to monitor progress on second units within the affordable housing committee.

## **URA OFFICIAL POSITIONS:**

The URA does not have an official position but will continue to monitor developments closely and participate in consultations with the Town as policy is developed.